





ニート^{だけど}
ハロワ^{にいったら}異世界
につれてかれた

7

桂かすが
Katsura Kawaga



そのサティの発言を、「口ではなんでも言えるさ」と、
フランチェスカは軽く鼻で笑った。

「だがそれを証明したいなら改めて手合わせしてやってもいい」

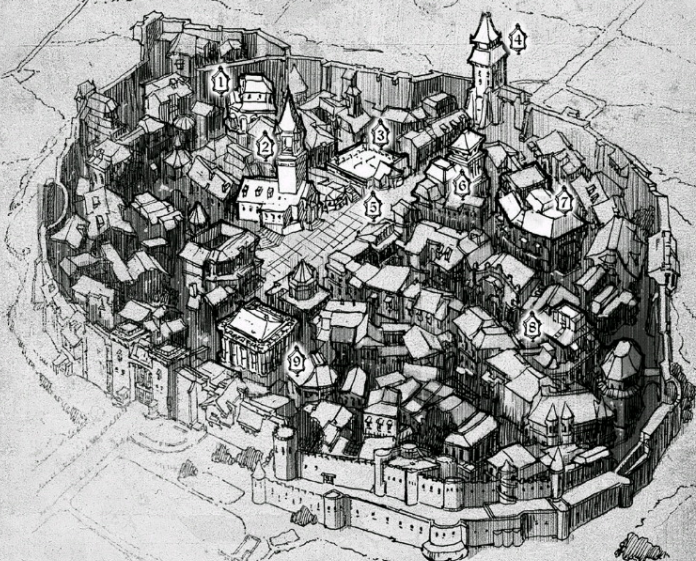
フランチェスカ・ストリンガー

「本気を出せばマサル様はわたしより強いんです」

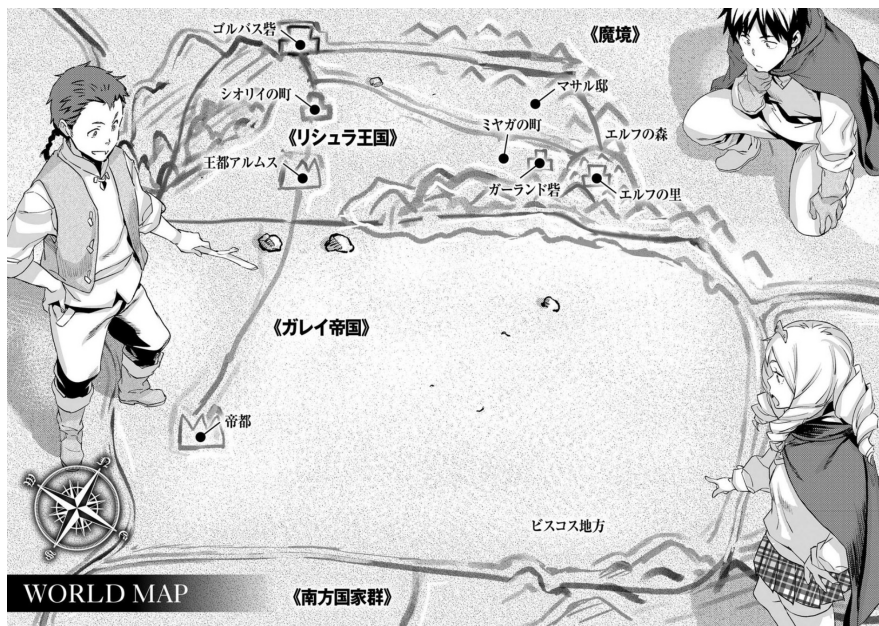
サティ



- | | | |
|--------|----------|---------|
| ① 奴隸商館 | ④ 見張り塔 | ⑦ 龍の息吹亭 |
| ② 鐘楼 | ⑤ 冒険者ギルド | ⑧ マサル宅 |
| ③ 訓練場 | ⑥ モルト商会 | ⑨ 神殿 |



The city of story



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Chapter 1 ~ Protection, and New Maid

My original intention by building the tower is to use it as a temporary villa, a means to comfortably pass this winter vacation. That is the reason why I chose an elevated place with a good view of the neighborhood area and where nobody lives.

I was caught up in the elf's war, and in a meantime, we decided to make a village and elect myself as the Lord. Our family number has also increased. As for the tower, we decided to build a new, large mansion in its stead since it is too small.

Within the dense forest surrounding the area, the village and the planned farmland area slowly make their appearance.

I'm becoming its lord and will start living here permanently. After few years, I will be elected to be a noble.

I was a simple NEET who was sent to another world, but after living here for half a year, I've decided to make myself a noble. I really don't understand life sometimes.....

With the help of the elves carpenter specialists, the process of building a new mansion is proceeding smoothly. Today, we have completed the third day of construction. They are preparing the household appliances as well, so when everything is finished, we just need to move in.

In addition to the three-story floor from the main building, there is an additional two floor which is the wooden floor dojo and the rooftop, making it a five-story building. After arranging the white wall and the roof tile, coupled with its huge size, the result will look like a magnificent Japanese Castle style building.

The furniture that I brought back were personally arranged to suit our taste. Of course, that furniture alone is not enough for this huge mansion. Including all the furniture and goods brought from the Elf

Country, alongside the other crafts, the extravagance found inside this mansion is limitless. Moreover, since this is a favour from the elf side, we don't have to worry about making a payment or whatnot.

If they asked us to pay, well, considering the price of the elf made goods that we saw at the market, even if we use all the previously gained rewards, they will not be enough. Actually, the possibility made me scared, not to mention God how much money we need to spend.

When the mansion is over, we will focus on the outdoor work next. This time, it will take longer since the site is very large, as far as eyes can see.

But that is not the end of the story. The people of the village also offered their help.

At first, I planned to do it myself, but now that it comes to this, I have no reason to refuse them. This road is guaranteed for 100 years by the chief. After looking at the chief's overall works, I can safely say that I'm still an amateur. This is not a do-it-yourself thing people do as a hobby, this is a village where everybody will live.

With that in mind, the rest of the mansion and the village's construction are done in parallel. Along with that, we also increased the amount of elf's physical labourers.

According to the chief's instructions, I just need to fill the wall making role, which isn't hard.

Finishing and detailing for the mansion is done by the professionals, hence the result is perfect.

Next is to build a village. Now that I rethink about it, my initial plan trying to create a small village on my own is too reckless. The work is much more diverse and more complex than I first imagined.

The village will have a population of around 50 people.

Well, originally this project was started to fulfil Ellie and Olba-san's wish. Normally, I find this kind of small project a pain and preferred not to do it, however I have no particular reason to decline it as well.

My gripe right now is how wonderful my mansion has become. The entire third floor is used as communal space for our family, and not only that, each room is so spacious and was equipped with an attached bathroom. Not only that, if I rearranged the kitchen and dining area together with the living room, I'll still have some room to spare. In my opinion, the housework and chores will become a tremendous burden. This might be impossible for us alone.

Titus's objective for coming to the house is to observe the state of the living conditions her Princess is currently living in. The same goes for Patos. She is only staying here temporarily. Not to mention, their job is to act as Lilia's bodyguard first and foremost. They are not Lilia's personal attendants hence not well versed with household chores. Currently, Patos is helping me with chores out of her own will, but one person alone is not enough.

We need to increase the amount of people. Of course, I'm talking about a slave.

The elves are offering someone as a temporary worker, but for now I'm putting that offer on hold.

I want to test the effect of Protection on the slaves.

Increasing our fighting forces for survival is vital. Once I've confirmed that Protection can be bestowed upon slavery, things will get simpler.

"First I'll buy a girl slave who does not have a good impression on me. Then, I will observe how it goes."

If she doesn't qualify for Protection, she will become a normal worker in this mansion.

If she qualifies for Protection, I will put her in my party as an adventurer and train her to do the household chores.

The selection of the second one will depend on how the first one goes.

If they do receive Protection, then I will emphasize on their battle potential. If I find that girl too easy getting attached to me, I will try

a second time. It's more convenient if they fall in love with me, but that is difficult.

I've been to the Elf Country several times now and among the elves, none of them are granted with Protection so far. Since most of them feel indebted to us, I can try hitting from that angle.

Therefore, ever since this morning I've been in this regions largest city, Miyaga, and to its slave dealer alone.

I'm looking for someone with talent to become our comrade. Everyone insisted to come along, however since this is something that has to do with Protection, it's no good unless I go alone.

"What kind of slave are you looking for today?"

I'm careful with my appearance today. As a result, I was greeted politely. Every single elf made accessory that I wore is worth several slaves here.

"Umu. I want a woman who is aesthetically pleasant and capable of housework. Unless I see her myself, I won't spend a dime from my pocket."

"If that is what you want, I have a suitable girl for you. She is a 15 year old girl with superb appearance. Naturally, she can do housework as well."

However, she has androphobia, the dealer said. (EN: Androphobia is fear of men for those who don't know.)

At first, she has a slight dislike of males, however since she looks beautiful, she was immediately bought. But one day, she was taken against her will and during her struggle, she accidentally hit her owner's vital point. It was a catastrophe and a surgeon was dispatched. Afterwards, she was returned right away.

It was said that the buyer was aware of her phobia and consented to it during his purchase but, it turns out her phobia is more serious than what he initially thought. Was she disgusted by her buyer that much?

Although the dealer is trying to make it sound ambiguous, it's probably on both of them, him and the previous buyer.

Simply said, she is a total failure to men. After making her give up for her night duty, she was forced to focus on housework instead.

After he finished giving off an explanation, a beautiful young girl was brought inside the room. She is wearing the thin slave outfit and her bountiful chests are poison to the eyes. I understand the previous owner's feeling for trying to attack her.

Black hair and oriental features, rarely seen here. Make me feel nostalgic.

Young, good looking and capable of doing work. The price is reasonable too. Hence, despite she was returned once, the price pretty much cover for it.

However, there are many other girls who are in the same price range. As a customer, there is no reason for me to personally select a problematic child.

I asked if she has other skills, but the dealer said only in domestic affairs. Even the shop is at wits end in her case.

"She has a good style."

When I come nearer, she quickly takes a step back. Her phobia is serious.

"Mr. customer, that is."

I was scolded by the person handling the slave.

"I'm just testing the water. Hey, you! My house is big, so you need to work hard, understood?"

"Y, yes. I've confidence with my physical strength, master."

Oh my. Quite a positive response from her. Just like that time with Sati, perhaps she has remained unsold for a long time. I don't think she is suitable as a harlot.

If I buy her, I can use her for trivial stuff. I'm a bit unwilling to do this, but perhaps it would be better if I become meaner to her.

"Is that the truth? You can claim whatever you think is true. But wasn't the reason you were returned back here because you hurt your previous master?"

I tried to look as mean as possible while I said it. Hey now, I'm sorry so please hold back your tears. Her mental strength doesn't seem to be strong.

"I can guarantee you her housekeeping skills."

"Well, then, show me your body. Strip."

I said while leering at her body uncouthly. This will certainly get me disliked. Naturally, this is an act. It's not because I want to see her slowly revealing her erotic body.

Sure enough, she is still hesitating with tears in her eyes.

"Mr customer."

Her clothing already smoothly underlines her figure and her legs are bare for all to see. It's pointless asking her to take off her clothes now.

"Yeah, yeah understood. No need to take them off. So, how much is her price?"

How to say this, the price on paper is higher than Sati.

"Isn't this a bit too expensive?"

"But she has good appearance and she can do her jobs well, too."

"But wasn't she returned once? If no one wants her then there is no point keeping the high price. Just a little bit less——"

I tried to haggle her price right in front of her face. This will make her less favourable of me. I'd say so myself.

In normal circumstances, I'll try to befriend the girl but this time I have my own goal and purposes. I cannot lay my hand on her anyways even if I don't do this.

In the end, I couldn't get a large discount but since it's still within my budget, I make my purchase anyway. She is capable of doing works and she looks good too. Even if I can't lay my hand on her, I can still make her wear maid clothes.

"Alright, I will pay that much. Hey, you. What is your name?"

"L, Lufutona."

"Alright, Lufutona. In general, you are responsible for housework and chores for my big mansion. It's a very wide space so cleaning them is hard. Prepare yourself well."

"P, please take care of me."

Even though someone decided to buy her at last, the person turns out to be an unpleasant man. She is on the verge of crying right now. I only did what I deemed necessary, but I really dislike how it turns out. I'll be gentle to her once we have returned.

Further explanation is unnecessary since I've experienced purchasing a slave in the past. I've been told that they will buy back the slave if she doesn't meet my requirement. I was told the same thing when I purchased Sati too.

I showed my guild card, pay them money and have the right transferred to me.

"Next, please drop your blood here."

I accept the needle, pierce my thumb and drip the bloods on the slave crest on Lufutona's arm. Lufutona seems to have resigned herself to her fate. I've told her there is no need for night duty, but that is just a verbal promise. Based on her previous experience, this kind of promise has no weight behind it. For a moment, I honestly thought if I can cure her of her androphobia, will it be fine if I try to put my hand on her.

The Protection.....she doesn't have it.

Well, that much is expected. Even if she does get the Protection while in the state of distrust, I'll be too afraid to give her any skill.

Anyhow, this is a good time to stop being mean to her.

I take out the clothes that I've prepared for her including the underwear and thick coat and give them to her.

Unlike the time when I bought Sati, we are currently in mid-winter, so she needs suitable clothing. This is also a great time to restore her faith and gain her trust.

"I'm a married man, and because of that I will not lay my hand on you. Since I'm the only man in the house, I think you will not have any problem working with my wives."

"Y, yes. Master."

"It's tough to clean the house since it is too large, but I hope you will do your best."

Seems like she is a bit puzzled with my sudden personality change, but at the same time she seems to be quite relieved.

But I only noticed something on the way back. I came here by flying, but it's impossible to return the same way now.

I might scare her if I suddenly opened up the Gate.....so, should we walk home? It's only a couple of hours from here.

When we are leaving the town, I saw the horse carriages pass by and think that it's still not too late to have her ride on Matsukaze while I Fly at her side. But having a horse appearing out of sudden will surely scare her.

Well, talking while leisurely walking is fine too. I can get to know more about Lufutona and gain her favours at the same time.

Lufutona has your standard story, sold by her household due to poverty, etc.

It's easy to say words like poor, but in this world, that leads to the situation of life and death. Since the family is on the brink of death from starvation, it's unavoidable if some family decided to sell off their children.

In Lufutona's case, not only her family, everyone in the village live in a community and likely to collapse together. Some example is like when farmers cannot produce the crops for some time.

Because of that, she was sold as the representative of the village.

Being sold as a slave is not necessarily bad itself. Since most slaves are bought by wealthy people, they don't need to worry about dying from starvation at the very least.

"You can fill your stomach full everyday if you come working at our household."

While slavery allow meal to be taken properly, most of the time they will be served with below average food. I decided to rest beside the highway and take out a food box. It's the fruity lunch box that I always have ready.

"Master are you a magician?"

Lufutona was surprised to see lunchboxes appearing out of nowhere. Seems like she didn't notice when I take out her clothes from the Item Box earlier.

"Correct. I'm a magician and an adventurer."

See, I take out my guild card and show it to Lufutona who is sitting at quite a distance from me. Looks like she doesn't want to be anywhere I can reach her with my hand.

"Amazing, B rank....."

While watching Lufutona eating her meals, I start talking about the circumstances in our house. Every family member is an adventurer and we just recently built a house. Since we are going to do jobs as adventurer, we are not around to do housework.

Watching Lufutona reminds me of Sati.

She is around the same age and was in the same situation as Sati. I'm sure she and Sati will get along well.

We cannot sit together unless we are separated by 1 meter apart, but here we are talking normally.

After walking for a little longer, we finally arrived at the provisional village.

This village has nothing in vicinity. Inside my planning, there will be a road to Miyaga town once the village has operated to certain extent, but for now the road is yet to be developed. To save time, I went through the non-paved road from town to town and she was able to follow me perfectly without me lowering my speed. Its true that she has a considerable physical strength.

“Is this.....the place?”

It's not weird if she is doubtful.

I've built the wall surrounding the village first, then comes the gate. However, it's still an empty village without a single person. The logging process is still in progress. There are several other buildings that need to be completed first too.

I didn't notice since I spend my time here every day, but after taking a good look at them, they look like a ruin. Doesn't this area look a lot like a horror film stage? If someone was careless and got lost here in the middle of the night, brr, so scary.

People are still not here because it's still early in the morning. During this time, the villager is giving priority to harvesting the farmland. Agricultural land requires a large area. If we cannot finish the development before spring, people will miss the crop planting period.

The elves will come around noon. Since they cannot work without mana, they will only work in the afternoon. Still, since magic is a convenient way of doing things, the progress is moving along quickly.

“It's a new village. This place is currently under construction. Right

now, there is not a single person, however people will come to work after lunch time.”

“Oh.”

From the village main street, straight on Lufutona’s point of view, a tower and a mansion are visible on the hill.

“That is my house.”

“.....the lord of this place is you, master?”

“I’m the head of this place. As you can see, this is a newly explored land. There are no rich people around, so I can’t call myself as the lord.”

We go to the village, enter through the entrance gate and climb up the stairs to the mansion.

“Welcome back, Masaru-sama!”

Sati came to pick me up before we begin climbing the stairs.

Lilia who came a bit later than Sati ran toward here and jumped on me.

“You are late!”

She hangs on my neck and said so.

Ever since *that* time, Lilia has become strangely attached to me. It’s a good thing.

“Yeah, I returned back home by walking. I’ll explain things later. Here, this girl is our new maid. Her name is Lufutona.”

“My, my. Is she another one of your wife candidates?”

Lilia whispers in low voice while having a look at Lufutona.

“No, no. I will explain it later. It’s cold out here, so let’s get inside.”

“Yeah, you’re right. Lufutona, welcome to my house. Now, please

don't be shy and get inside."

"An elf!?"

Her surprise continues until we get inside the house.

A luxurious mansion. Five wives, including the elf earlier. Titus and Patos, remind me, what is their job again? for some reason, they are staying here and work a lot.

"I'm Titus. This woman here is Patos. We are Lilia-sama's personal attendants, but sometimes we also help around the house."

Oh, so that's it. They take their own initiative to help around the house, but that doesn't change their status as Lilia's personal attendant.

By the way, recently Titus and Patos asked me to address them without honorific. They are fairly older than us, but since we are not addressing Lilia with honorific any more, they felt uncomfortable to be addressed as such and ask us to do the same to them.

And thus, I've got myself a new maid. Now that I have Lufutona-chan in my house, I can leave everything to her.

However, it looks like her first impression on me could not be dispelled easily. She still doesn't like being near me. I was told by Ann to refrain from touching her.

Afterward, they did an all-girls gathering. I don't have an excuse to join them except for the talk about Protection, so I'm only staying that long.

Since the mansion is huge, as long both parties wish to avoid the others, we will rarely encounter each other. Plus, with my detection, I can slip away easily from her. I don't want to complain when she does her work terribly, so I will never put unnecessary burden on her.

Sometimes, I notice her from afar, but I've heard a story about how Lufutona-chan is working energetically every day in some place I don't see.

Buy sadly, one thing I regret about this is that I cannot worship her in the maid clothes that I've personally prepared.

On the following evening after I've met Lufutona, I quietly went back to Siory town with one of Ellie's gates.

I need to confirm the matter thoroughly since there are at least 2 people who are potentially to get the Protection.

The gate opened at the basement. After looking at the outside, I've noticed that Will is home. Like, is he still living in the doghouse inside the garden?.....no, perhaps he is just happy to have somewhere he can live safely in.

After taking a look inside my menu, I've confirmed that Will has no Protection. Well, we only interacted for a brief period.

For now, I guess I better leave him alone. Things will go to the south if I got caught by him.

I let Ellie go back first, then I go to the town.

During this time, I think the priest is still at the shrine.

Truthfully speaking, I want to visit Sergeant-dono and listen to the latest development, but so far, each time I tried to initiate a conversation with him, I can't elicit a good response. I cannot decide. Perhaps it's the best if we can become a buddy, but for now I'm putting that plan on hold.

This is a general knowledge among people in Siory, that Sergeant-dono is the silent type of guy.

As dusk approaches, it's easier to go around undetected even among acquaintances once I've put my hood on and kill my presence. I have

many acquaintances among the people from the shrine, so I decided to kill my presence and wait outside. Unless his movement pattern has changed, the priest is supposed to be among the people inside.

“Priest-sama, it’s been a long time.”

When it has finally gotten completely dark, I call out to the priest who has finally finished his job. I completely look like a stalker now.

“W, woah! Masaru-dono!”

“Ah, please keep your voice low. I come here today secretly, after all.”

When I tell him that I want to talk about a confidential thing, he brings me to the private room nearby the dining room.

“Is Angela doing well?”

“Yes, of course. Our talk will take some time today and I would like to report to you regarding the recent status. First——”

I have successfully completed the first Quest. Ann already made her report regarding this Quest.

After I arrived at the designated place, I’ve built a house in the woods to temporarily accommodate us.

Then, the battle at the Elf Country.

“I’ve heard about that story. But from what I heard, the battle ended in a day.”

Since any news can be transferred by transmission magic, news spread out quickly.

“That battle was truly a close one. A request for reinforcements was sent by the Elf Country, and——”

The Earth Turtle King. The imminent collapse of Elf Country. The tough battle. And in the end the monsters withdrawl once the adventurer’s reinforcement squad arrived.

Afterwards, I tell him about me becoming a lord, and right now we are pioneering the land for that purpose.

“Oh, that is wonderful news.”

I took a long breath once I’ve finish reporting everything to him. And next is the main reason for my visit today.

“You see, my main objective today is to seek your opinion, Priest-sama.”

Lilia’s Protection. The newly appointed maid receives no Protection. Confirmation regarding absence of Protection from Will and the priest as well.

“I see. The condition for Protection, huh.....”

“Yes. And I’m wondering if there is a way to increase the amount of people that I can share my Protection with.”

To be honest, I’m stuck if being a slave is no good. There is no such thing as a woman suddenly falling from the sky or a mature woman conveniently getting attacked by group of thieves at the right timing.

In Ann and Ellie’s cases, including Tilika, I never aimed for them in the first place, and I don’t think I have the guts to pull something like that again. In Lilia’s case, the aforementioned approach seems to be effective, but since she was in a dire situation where they were assaulted by monsters, I can see any adventurer, or even Will who can pull it off.

“I don’t think it is wrong to purchase a slave. There is a close tie between enslavement and love, after all.”

“You mean, if I buy a slave normally, without being mean or whatever, the Protection will naturally appear?”

“I don’t think the matter is that simple, but.....by enslavement, it usually refers to the slave favouring their master. Psychologically, they are not much different from marriage.”

The psychological state refers to people determination to do their

best for the rest of their life. Certain dependencies. Certainly, Sati was once a slave, and even now her attitude never changes.

“With that said, it’s impossible for me to receive your Protection, Masaru-dono. My loyalty lies to God and this temple, and even to my wife. No matter how much I respect Masaru-dono, there is no way I will depend on you.”

“If romantic emotion is important, doesn’t that mean a guy will never receive my Protection?”

“The bar will be set higher. I, for one, is because of my own pride. Perhaps Will-kun does not feel very much indebted to you yet.”

What is the difference between Will-kun and Lilia? There is not much different if you compare our interaction time and me saving their lives. Was it the amount of love that differs? Or does Will have some circumstances that I’m not aware of, or is there any specific reason why Will is not thinking of me as his companion?

And if we’re talking about his pride, since he is still young, I don’t think he has developed strong pride yet.

Lets say, I think by carefully taking care of selected children in the orphanage, those children might be capable of taking my Protection.

Nah, that sounds too much like a brainwash. Then, if I were to start a religion.....no, I need to reveal the fact that I’m an apostle and be okay with that. Then, I will gather followers of my own. With the oracle and my tremendous power combined, and an addition of the Protection, I believe my cause will look convincing.

When we were at the Elf Country, all the achievements were distributed evenly amongst all party members. If I acted more prominently, will anyone else besides Lilia receive the Protection? Although it’s a long-passed event by now.

Well, this kind of planning can only be executed as a last resort.

“Thank you very much, Priest-sama. I managed to gather lots of ideas.”

“I hope my simple thought will prove to be useful to Masaru-dono.”

For now, the plan is to catch a woman who has fallen in love with me.

I need to find and buy slaves like Sati, a person who holds me in favourable position.

The person needs to devote themselves to respect me from early age.

A person that need saving, like Will and Lilia.

Advertise myself widely as an apostle.

So, the only feasible ways to get a person with Protection are these five. For now, taking a slave is the only fast way.

And Will too. How can I forget the existence of someone important like him? What a troublesome fellow.

By the way, I tried to ask everyone if there are any candidates among the women we saved during the locust attack after I returned back home and turned out, when they noticed Tilika is a Truth Official, everyone quickly went away.

I guess some of them do have ulterior motives.

Well.....that save me from asking them by myself.

Chapter 2 ~ If Winter Comes Can Spring be Far Behind?

I, Yamano Masaru (23) wake up early in the morning.

Sati wakes up right after dawn. Still, it's fine to wake up late and none of us would mind it. However, today I woke up awfully early.

Sati, Tilika and Ann already started doing housework and making breakfast by the time I get up.

When Sati came to wake me up, I pulled her inside my futon for a little skinship in the morning. In the end, I let her go after some slight touching. It's hard to do any work if I got excited right from the morning, plus that would incur Ann's wrath.

Sometimes, Ann will accompany someone else and come wake me up. Taking both people at once is a bold act.

During my day off, sometimes I will lay down on the futon till late day.

Naturally, I'm not alone.

That is the second happiest moment in my day.

Inside the mansion there is a large dining hall and small dining hall. The smaller dining hall is located on the third floor together with our family's communal space. They come together with a kitchen as a set and we usually cook and eat there. The large dining hall is yet to be used.

A considerable part of the housework was undertaken by Lufutunachan, but we are still cooking for ourselves.

After I dressed up and get prepared, I went to the dining hall. Everyone is already here for breakfast.

Today's menu consists of cereals and vegetables, salad with meat-rich soup, bread and fruits. The menu is not fancy in the slightest, however there is no shortage of food.

I start to eat while checking the schedule for today.

"The village's development is proceeding according to plan."

Ellie oversees the village development project together with Olban's group. The construction is left to me and the elves, however the interview and admission for migrant workers seems to be quite a difficult job as well.

People who have enough funds to purchase homes and farmland are easier to manage. We will listen to their wishes and proceed to address them to the vacant lot. They are capable of living on their own.

However, most of the immigrants don't possess money. Some people can be put inside the repayment plan, but some people are starting the agriculture work for the first time. In order to put the village on track, we need to put extra care into our selection and we are in the stage where we do need to refuse some applicants.

We also need to have minimum commercial facilities set up. Inn, restaurant and sundry shop. Not to forget blacksmith and carpentry too. We need to ready all these facilities appropriately based on the amount of residents we have, also just enough to attract outsiders.

Just in case the number of residents fluctuates, we need to fine tune the construction plan based on that assumption.

Normally, this kind of project will take years only for the preparation. Yet, since Ellie is aiming to finish everything by spring, she was busy every day.

Ellie even made a request to me to advance the village pioneering project ahead of what is scheduled.

Originally, the plan was to build a small village before spring arrived,

however the number of migrant applicants has sharply increased.

Although this village is equipped with a great wall and fertile lands, due to it being constructed mostly by magic, there is zero construction cost and because of that we are able to keep the price low. The story about the elf involvement in this village construction has also spread wide and the spirit fountain installed beside my manor managed to boost our popularity.

At the earlier stage of village pioneering, water had become a problem.

It doesn't possess a problem for the farmland, however the planned village is located in a high area due to where my mansion is located.

Even if we want to draw the water out, how can we take it from the underground? Do we forcibly pump it out with a water mill? Or should we build a well?

Should we relocate the village?

Having a well is enough for a living, however the more comfort the better.

A timely help was offered by Lilia.

"You should make a wish to have a water spirit for this village. I'm sure Masaru's wishes will be granted."

I was informed that all the water in Elf Country are sourced by the water spirits. Since there are many spirits around, if I make a wish, one of them will surely heed my call.

So, I immediately went to the Elf Country and have an audience with the King to get his permission, and when I make a call at the fountain where the water spirits were gathered, I heard a chatter and the spirits descended. The surrounding suddenly feels damp.

"Aren't you the popular one."

“What is the next step?”

“You can choose any one of them.”

She said I can choose, but I don't know what the difference among them is, except for their mana.....

Then, I pointed out to the spirit who exuded the strongest mana among all that gathers.

Was it a mistake. Or was it the correct choice. I should have tried to consult with the others before choosing the spirit without thinking.

In response to my choice, the water in the fountain swelled repeatedly until it reached several meters. The water spirit that I selected revealed its enormous true form.

Lilia and the King's spirits are immensely huge.

“Err, what? Isn't this fella a big one?”

“Y, yeah.....somehow. Isn't he the eldest spirit that resides in this fountain?”

The elves who are spectating us at the back also break out into noises. It is a powerful spirit that is usually lurking inside the fountain depths, and it seems that it rarely shows up.

“Would it be fine to take such a thing.....?”

“U, umu. There are many water spirits residing here, so in respect to the amount of water required for the whole country, if all of them banded together, there should be no problem for them to provide supply.”

“An exchange.....”

“You shouldn't, not after you have made your choice and get an approval. We don't want to risk the spirit getting angry.”

The bubbly giant water spirit drifted this way towards me. Its body is drenched with moisture, but it's moderately warm and not cold.

I got directly wrapped by the spirit and a happiness was transmitted to my heart.

Such a big thing suddenly came out, but that wasn't bad in the slightest.

Just as I saw it earlier, it is usually docile and not imposing, however it is said that it will participate in defence against foreign enemy. In the future, even if the village turns into a huge city, we will not have a problem with water supply.

The clean water produced by the spirit is very high in quality that people will purchase them with money. These waters will be sent to the village and farmland.

Regardless, whether it is about the elf or about the fountain, the information spread out quicker than I thought, although I never mind about them much.

A migration is different than moving out. They are choosing their one final abode. It's a given that they will give all-out during information gathering.

Thus, it was decided that the spirit fountain spring will be located beside the mansion and as a result this increased the workload tremendously. The farmland is fertile, and the walls are wonderfully built, so I'm tasked with setting up the spirit fountain. Even so, I can't complain about it.

"I work in the afternoon."

"Tilika, Sati is following you for work today, so I'm leaving Matsukaze to you."

With the help from the Truth Official organization, Tilika is selected as a part time Truth Official for this place. We are making a business trip at the village outskirts. It was a request from the Truth Official residing in Miyaga town scheduled for today and the details of the job are top secret.

Sati is acting as Tilika's escort.

Ann is holding two posts which are as the representative priest from the shrine and as an escort.

The shrine side intends to cooperate. Although she is a lower ranking priest, she is still the lord's wife. At the moment, it might not be beneficial to the shrine, however in the long term, there seems to be an incentive for their support.

The trip for making a survey might possess no danger, but even for Tilika, if her back is exposed in an unfamiliar place, she might run into a danger.

There will always be dangers in this line of occupation. Even though an escort was prepared from the Truth Official side, I still can't calm my uneasiness, hence I've decided to add an escort from our side as well.

My construction work in the village starts in the afternoon, however since I have Matsukaze coming alongside Tilika, I'll still be aware of the situation even if I am away. It makes travel more convenient, and if that guy starts running seriously, it will be a cinch to escape from the monsters at that area.

The strength of the summoned beasts is dependant on their summoners mana reserve. The further they are from the summoner, the harder it is to maintain them, and, in some cases, they might disappear. If the person is a high-level summoner like Tilika, they will have no problem maintaining even hundreds of beasts and they can be materialized in this world for long periods of time. By the way, I'm not capable of that yet.

"I will practice throughout the morning just like planned."

Most people will have the morning for themselves, and in the afternoon, they will go run their errands. Training, hunting, during these holidays these are the 3 top activities that we are doing.

Since it isn't easy to strengthen our selves through Divine Protection, I need to take urgent measure to strengthen the current members.

“Umu. Today, I’m going to acquire the shield skill!”

The training ground is located at the mansion’s castle tower’s fourth floor, lower level. The so-called dojo, that is.

It has a sufficient height and space, so we won’t feel claustrophobic as long we don’t practice with spear.

The dojo is within the wooden planks and the weapons are arranged as in swordsmanship dojo. Since I’ve got a small Ito Kami idol in my possession, I take this chance to enshrine it.

That is for the sake of atmosphere, but as a Japanese I’m a person who respects God.

“Wahahaha! Witness my true power! My beautiful techniques!”

“Yes. You are amazing, Lilia-sama.”

Titus who acted as Lilia’s partner praised her.

To be frank, both her swords and shield skills don’t reach level 1 yet.

You’re pampering her too much, don’t you think? After I asked her, I was told that their policies are to praise and stretch.

She doesn’t have much opportunity to participate in a training outside for the magic one, so first of all they need to get her used to moving her body.

Originally, Lilia’s physical strength is so meagre, she never thought about physical shield skill, but after she obtained Physical Reinforcement skill once she levels up, she now works diligently to strengthen her body and train for close combat battle.

Both sword and shield are in her hands, then her figure wearing full plate armour, she totally nailed the female shielded knight style.

Lilia is not currently bound to any jobs, so she is in full time training. Her training menu included, close quarter combat and vanguard position rotation, magic and spirits manipulation and housework. There are many things that she needs to remember.

Well, since I'm not weak physically, I take things slow and have a relaxing day.

Olba-san and Nania-san were also present during training day. The two knight elves were also pretty strong.

Titus, especially. During dojo session, her skills are on par with me and Sati hence making her a good sparring partner. On the other hand, once she is paired with Patos, I couldn't get even a single victory. Sati won several times.

Weird. I'm supposed to be super strong now after my training drills with Sergeant-dono.....

But I have figured a way to win against Sati. With magic.

I found it out when I tried fighting her during our free time. We go to the dojo alone.

"Let's compete with one magic blow, Sati. If you win, I will listen to everything you say."

Everything, if she wins against me.....is that okay? Sati usually listens to whatever I say.

"I'll do it!"

We have wooden swords and armours. Light weapon, but effective to take a person out.

"But are we going to fight in the dojo?"

"Yeah. I will not use a magic that will destroy the dojo."

We soon face each other.

Even after I give the starting signal, Sati was alerted and not going for close confrontation.

I release my mana. Sati reacted and move.

A sword feints. Sati hesitates for a moment. With that one opening

Invoke, 【Covert】 and 【Short-range Transition】 .

I instantaneously appeared at Sati's back. She turned her back, but sadly for her I managed to land a hit.

“Ah.....transfer magic.”

“Correct. I name it, the Metastasis Blade. Amazing, no?”

“Yes, that's amazing! Ah, but, the promise.....”

She lost and now she is downhearted. Don't tell me she is wishing for something? Well, normally without this one strike out rule I usually lost.

“What were you planning to ask?”

“That, maybe something like going for shopping together, or.....”

Doing something with just the two of us, huh. That's true, recently everything we've done we do together with everyone.

“So, this is my win. For our next holiday, I want Sati to prepare lunch boxes for when we are going out together, and you are going to hold our shopping luggage.”

“Y, yes! I will do it!”

However, for this Metastasis Blade to work, I need to land a one hit kill strike.

Heck, wasn't it awesome how Sati managed to react to it first-hand?

My winning rate steadily decreased as I attempted to try various other skills, and in the end, I settled to one win out of three attempts.

“Once I know you're coming, I can somehow deal with it.”

So, she said.

Conversely, even if the opponent is aware of this technique, it will still remain effective if an element of surprise is added.

For example, after setting up a smokescreen or water curtain, this kind of melee combat. Of course, I need to ensure it is one hit kill without fail.

I also discussed it with Sati and devised a strategy that could be used in various situation. If the opponent is a monster, the need for this skill might not arise since we have many options left.

“Masaru-sama, you are really amazing.”

Right, right~

“I’ve become sweaty. Why don’t we take a bath together?”

“Yes!”

My training and strengthening regime are proceeding nicely. I will have a little fun with whoever is finished, so it becomes an incentive for rivalries during training.

Ann is working hard with her training.

Ann’s strongest trait is her experience in close combat battle. However, during our usual hunt, her role is to cast long range magic hence no turn to utilize her skills.

Taiga is acting as her monster-like opponent. It is cute and dependable when it is on our side, however turn that around and it will serve as terrible enemy. From its delivered power in bulk to its swiftness. In term of fighting prowess, I think it would be comparable to Orc King?

I wonder if using real sword is good, but using a wooden sword is no good.

We also had the opponents do the same. It served as a good simulation when shielding against real monster.

The best way to train is by receiving a beating. Blown away, beaten to pulp. Taiga is very strong.....

Ellie and Tilika both have combat training, but sometimes, we all practice magic together aside from training.

Ellie is practicing her dagger handling skill. Tilika is practicing with a whip that she has procured from somewhere. Seems like it is the type of weapon often used by beast tamers. Will it function as a tool to manipulate summoned beasts like Taiga?

I have decided to increase the number of slaves.

What happened to Lufutona-chan is not enough to make clear of what effect enslavement will have upon the Divine Protection. Whether or not it was a coincidence, the reason why Sati was granted Protection is yet to be determined.

With that in mind, I arrived at the same slave merchant store, again.

“My, my, isn’t that Masaru-sama. How is Lufutona doing?”

“Umu. I leave her to my wives, but I’ve received feedback that she is doing well.”

“If you say so.”

“I’ve come today to take another one. What I want is——”

She needs to be cute and aggressive during night duty. Also, housekeeping skill is essential.

This time, the slave dealer brought out five people at the same time. Each and every girl look great.

Then, I spoke to each of them, and proceed to choose the girl who is likely to be the most proactive.

“I work hard at night as well! I am the type that do so!”

She proclaimed with big smile.

Her name is Tamara-chan. She is a beauty. The price is also quite high.

Indeed, it is impossible for her to acquire Protection on the spot. Maybe, slowly once we are at home.....so I thought.

“I’m sorry. It was just an act! Really awfully sorry. I already have a lover back at my home town.....”

She quickly spit out the truth in the presence of a Truth Official.

Certainly, I never asked her whether she has someone that she likes or not.....

Tamara-chan’s home town is not that far, hence I decided to go there and confirm the story with the so-called lover.

Tamara-chan’s lover is the third son of a poor farmer family and he is a year younger than her. He is neither resourceful nor has an influential position. It was said that he can only rub his fingers when his lover was sold. This is not a sweet world where you can retract to your safe space and being prepared to die at any moment is normal. By being a coward, a mutual destruction is imminent.

Once I introduced him to a same working place with Tamara-chan, and when he reached our village, I ended up employing him as our gardener. Tamara-chan is of course a maid in our house.

On a later date, we held a wedding ceremony for him and Tamara-chan at our mansion, hosted by Ann and they officially become a couple.

Once he has prepared enough money, he will properly pay out and buy Tamara-chan back from me.

They seem happy. I was also thanked. That guy is working hard. Yet, he has not acquired the Protection.

“My, oh my, isn’t this Masaru-sama. How is Tamara working?”

Although I’m disappointed with the most important aspect, there is no way I can voice it out at the slave trader. Since she is doing her

job properly.

“Umu. She is a hard-working girl. She is definitely doing well.”

“If you say so.”

“I’m here to find another one, again. What I want is——”

This time, three girls were brought out.

If I failed this time, I will give up for good. Today, I’m bringing Tilika along with me.

However, the fact is things are not that easy. The candidates were brought out, and once their real intentions were confirmed, they said it is sad to be a slave, and they are reluctant to be embraced for the first time by a people like me. They can’t help it since they are doing it for a living. There is not a slave with disabilities that I can cure conveniently like a Sati.

Some girls are digging into the idea of marrying into a rich lord, however will they be able to acquire Protection?

However, the beastmen girl is the only one who has potential. She has no lovers. She doesn’t have any particular negative thought about me. It is her wish as a warrior, that she is willing enough to marry someone if that person is strong enough.

Shira-chan is 18 years old. She is a beautiful woman with sharp features and slender body.

“I’m currently B rank. Soon, I will rank up and become an A rank.”

Shira agreed with my purchase. As for the night job, she wants to ascertain my strength first.

Everything is proceeding nicely this time. Considering that she has good looks and ability to fight, her price is reasonable——

——Omission——

—Shira-chan suffered a complete loss against Sati.

She is small, cute and possess high strength. I am stronger, and she love that more.

As for me, I have no problem taking her as my bride seeing how strong she is, making it a great offer. When I asked her how much she like the thought, her rate is 10/10 in love with Sati and 3/10 for me. No, honestly, she only rates me 2.

Will she acquire protection if I took her as my bride even in such a state? She is not that interested in magic. She is not bothered at all when I use basic magic.

Though, she might be surprised if I showed her a high-class magic.....

Still, due to her promise, Shira-chan is offering up her body, yet since it is not ensured whether Protection comes with enslavement, I'm hesitating since I don't know what subtle moment that will trigger the acquirement. It is because of the premise of Protection that everyone allows me to purchase more slaves still.

She has shown enough love to be embraced, but for now, I neither refuse nor take up her offer.

For the time being, Shira-chan's night duty is put on hold. When I told the slave trader my requirement, I was laughed at. I told him that I want a slave that is capable of working, but if she is up for night duty then it is a bonus. Somehow, he was convinced with that. Well, I do have five wives already, right?

I will think on how to handle Shira-chan after some time has passed and when she has already made friends. Perhaps, by then she already fall in love with me.

Shira's swordsmanship skill is around level 2 to level 3. Since it looks useful, I decided to make her our security guard while in training. She will become the gatekeeper.

If she could fight, why did she become a slave, and it is said that she lost a certain battle. The details however, cannot be shared.

A weak beastmen holds no value. Shira-chan told us how she wants to become stronger.

I can agree with that and I would like her to have Protection if possible; but if this is the case I need to hide the matter regarding Protection. If she wants to have Protection for the sake of power alone, then it would be too much.

If she is a person with faith, me being an apostle of God might likely put myself in better light, however she doesn't seem to be the part.

Difficult.

“She is not a fated person for you. So far, the only person who are granted Protection are those that met you by chance. It is silly to think that you can have the person you bought granted a Protection, simply as that.”

What she said is correct.

I need to raise a flag for an event somehow.

“How about Titus? Once she acquired Protection then she will become hella strong, you know?”

“I will think about it once Lilia-sama bears a child. It would be nice if my child can become a foster child with yours.”

“Hmm. Patos is already out of the question, however I have an inclination that Titus is in love with Masaru.”

“Well, that's about it. However, based on what we already heard, I don't think it's possible for her to be granted Protection, too.”

That's because Titus loves the Princess above anything else. But she will think about it once Lilia has given birth. I heard something interesting.

“Well, this is as much as we can expect from the slaves for now.”

I'm not giving up yet, but now that I've suffered three consecutive failures, I need to rethink my strategy. The first batch of immigrants has finally arrived at the village, so things have gotten busier.

Once it gets warmer, we will start the journey to the capital city through the city of Siory, and next I will drop by Ellie's home at the Empire and greet Ellie's parents. It will be a long trip, so by that time we need to take a break from constructing the village.

As busy as we have been, things are rather peaceful now that the God is keeping quiet.

My room has a good view of the village, and from the observation deck, we can see the whole village.

Every day, I will take a look at the village growth during my spare time.

The home that I have built from scratch, my own village.

Creating a village and become its lord, at first, I was at a loss on how things should be.....

Even when I miss Japan, I rarely have that thought when I am here.

This is the home where my family lives, my new hometown. I can feel that.

I don't want to lose them.

Chapter 3 ~ Omen

“Masaru, your Item Box is not fair.”

After one round of battle, I was sweating so I entered the adjoined bath, and Ellie suddenly blurted it out after I took out my towel from the Item Box. Hearing that line makes me feel nostalgic.

“What are you talking about, now of all times.....”

I wiped down my body and get inside the futon again together, naked.

“When I saw it just now, I just realized that yours really is way different than the normal Item Box.”

“Well, of course.”

“Try taking something out.”

I take out the pudding that I have stored inside and hold it.

“Why a pudding.”

“I thought you are in a bad mood.”

“Surely not! I just want to see your mana flow when you use your Item Box!”

Even though she said that, she still takes the pudding, then she sat on the bed and started eating. She was probably hungry after all the calorie-consuming activities that she partakes.

For now, I comply to her request and show her my Item Box usage many times.

“The flow of your mana is different, and it goes to a different place too. How can I say it, a faraway place?”

She said that while watching me using my Item Box.

“Once the difference is known, perhaps it is possible to recreate Masaru’s Item Box?”

“Hmm, it would certainly be amazing if it could be reproduced.”

Whether the spatial understanding or spatial manipulation is more flexible with Space Magic level 5, or whether there is more potential for the Space Magic itself, I don’t know. For that Ellie is thinking about suitable practice.

“Simply said, it is like I can only use the Fire Magic that is corresponding to my level. I only remember how much output I must channel my mana out in order to use certain magic.”

Level 5 mastery of any magic should not be that shabby, said Ellie firmly.

“I think severing the space is very cool.”

“.....what is the space, really, in the first place?”

It is a difficult question. Even from where I come from, there is a similar question regarding space and nobody has clear answer yet.

But I think I can explain it the way I understand it.

“Let’s see. I will explain it to you according to my own understanding.”

“That is fine.”

“First, we are going to see it from one-dimension aspect. It is only one dimension because it is comprised of a single line.”

I took out a notebook and draw a line on it.

“One dimension?”

“This is one-dimension. Two dimensions is like this. Unlike the first line, this time it had vertical and horizontal line. So, this is two dimensional.”

I add the third straight line to the first line and draw a complete square.

“Hmhmhm.”

“Now, the two-dimension become three dimensions. The three dimension is consisted of height, width and length. This is known as three-dimensional space.”

I take out a square wooden box filled with towels from inside my Item Box and shows her.

“Yeah, I understood.”

“And here is where we add time. The flow of time from past to the future is well regarded as the fourth dimension. The world we are currently living in is said to be in fourth dimension, is what the popular belief said.”

“Somehow.....I got it?”

“Then let’s go back to the two dimensions. For example, let’s say there is a person living in this two-dimensional plane. Try imagining that for a moment.”

I draw a circle in the box.

“This round two-dimensional person cannot see us. Because they are from outside of our world. But, when we put a finger this way, it can see part of us. And when we raise our finger or move it to another point, it will appear as a simple movement in our viewpoint, however for the two-dimensional person, it just fades away and it will appear as if it has moved somewhere.”

“A.....I don’t know if I can see it. No, I can. So, this is Space Magic?”

As expected of her, Ellie catches up quickly.

“Right. Even within this four-dimensional world, there exists a fifth dimension, and I think Space Magic basically manipulates that dimension.”

I tore down the two-dimensional person drawing.

“Right now, the space has torn down. Although from our perspective, we understood that the two-dimensional person is ripped, however there is no way that person itself can understand that phenomenon. That is because the two-dimensional person cannot see the entirety of the notebook, and they cannot see us who is living in a world outside of his, too.”

“That’s mean, we cannot understand the space we are living in, too.....?”

“We might not be able to completely understand it, but we at least have an idea. Hence you can use magic to manipulate it.”

“.....”

Ellie thought for a while and then actively manipulate her mana. She fails to sever the space, though.

Somehow, seeing Ellie’s serious face while she is naked is seriously turning me on. But I’m sure she will get angry if I cop a feel of her boobs now, and it is dangerous to do so while she is using Space Magic.

“That is?”

“I can grasp the space.”

She gets it but couldn’t understand. She knows what to do with her mana, but she doesn’t have the means to feel the space itself.

“Hey Masaru, try using your Item Box one more time.”

I took out an item from the Item Box as she desired.

“.....I think I got it a little bit. Thank you, Masaru.”

“My pleasure.”

My explanations were not related to physics or stuff like that, I was just parroting the knowledge that I got from anime and manga.

Basically, it is the theory behind the spaceship warp technology.

Hence, I'm not that confident whether my explanation is correct, but even if I admit it now, it will only make Ellie more confused. Does the Ito Kami know the truth? Even if I asked I doubt I will get an answer.

"If you know something new about space, please let me know."

"Okay. But Masaru really knows about some unexpected thing, you know? Do you know about any other interesting thing?"

"Hmm, let's see. Inside this world, there exist small substances called atom——"

I tried my best to explain it, but halfway through my explanation, Ellie was fast asleep.

I am already exhausted and after taking a bath alone, I wander inside the futon.....I'm already at my limit.

Hunting in this area also serve as a chance to level up Lilia, so we went to subjugate the monsters within Yamanosu village (temporary) border.

However, since we are only going hunting for half a day in three days, it's hard to do a thorough search since the range is too wide so we are not making great progress. I was planning to go to the Demon Realm if we found nothing, but I think it is impossible for now.

Not only it is a wide area, we are still in winter so there are few monsters. I heard the Earl also regularly takes care of surrounding monster and that is making the monsters harder to find.

I feel like it is inefficient if we continue to hunt this way, so I thought we should discontinue hunting in the surrounding area and go to the Demon Realm, however that idea was opposed by Titus. She is still worried about Lilia's skill. Well, if she is that opposed then there is no point of doing it.

During this straightforward and non-profits hunt, I've decided to increase the amount of my own summoned beasts.

Other than level 3 Matsukaze whom I put on hold, I tried to make the prey that I have defeated during our hunt into a summoned beast.

For level 1, I get myself a small owl that fit on the palm of my hand. It is for reconnaissance and contact. If I exchange mine with Tilika's summoned beast, then we can keep contact with each other. I named it Fuku. I don't know how to pronounce its English name, Fukuroo. [Tl note: Ural Owl]

For level 2, I get myself a black panther. It is smaller compared to Taiga, however in terms of ability I think it is not quite behind. I named it Kuro. Because it is black.

Both I've killed by my own hand, so it feels questionable to enslave them afterwards. Although I feel sorry to enslave the monsters after killing them, in this another world, survival is to the fittest, so Tilika says that it doesn't matter.

Since both of them are nocturnal, I have them in charge of watching our mansion during night time.

Even when I'm asleep, they can look around without my permission and if they encountered a suspicious person, they will directly report to me. With such a method, there is no need for an alarm.

They are only guarding nearby place, since there is a high wall and Shira-chan and the other elves are on the lookout and guarding our house.

Plus, the rumours about the lord who is an A rank adventurer and actively suppressed the monsters in vicinity has flown around and Ellie was pleased to see more people are favourable to migrate here.

If we keep receiving them without restraints, won't our village quickly increase to the scale of a town?

The first group of migrants has arrived, and shortly after the village began full scale operation, the elf side has sent a squad responsible for patrol.

Those people are within the premise of our house, so I've decided to build houses for them within the perimeter of the wall for them to

stay.

Olba-san and the others are also coming to this village. So, I've built a fine house for them nearby the gate just outside our grounds.

Without further said, he is the village chief.

Most work that requires a lot of mana is almost finished so the rest is to occasionally create the agriculture land. This village is under the protection of the elves. I'm thankful to them for that.

Thus, my work in the village has decreased a lot.

Now, I cannot say that the village is small.

The outer wall of the village expanded twice in a short period.

Ann requested to build a shrine in the future, so I have secured a place for that.

The adventurer guilds and commercial guilds have both sent their requests to open their branch offices.

Putting the shrine aside, I always thought whether I needed the guild in this village, and I was told that they can see future prospect in this village, however in truth they just want a middle-man to contact with the elves.

The Earl also came to greet us once.

His subordinates had come to see how things were going on for a while, but it seems that he wanted to see the progress with his own eyes. Though, if he really wants to come, he should have contacted us beforehand.

The King took advantage of my Gate to come for a visit and to play.

I cannot invite the Earl to my mansion because the King does not seem like he is returning soon.

When I told him that the Earl is coming, he asked me to meet the Earl together.

If possible, I want to hide somewhere I would not be spotted by the Earl, but they are aware of our circumstances, so I doubt they will say strange things.....

The Earl came to greet me while overseeing the state of the village from above.

Well, I don't mind looking at the Earl as someone with higher position. While I'm asking to serve him with tea, I led him to the waiting room which is occupied by the King.

Meanwhile I'm leading him to the room, he asked me how I made the agricultural land for this village, and can I maintain the village of this size or about how small this village is.

Sometimes we stopped and checked the furniture and accessories brought by the elves, but I did not say anything about it.

They are the highest-grade item the elves have chosen as appropriate for their princess. They are definitely more gorgeous than the one found in the Earl's mansion. You jealous?

And the face that he made when he met the King is truly wonderful. He knows the elves are getting involved in this project, but I bet he didn't expect the King himself to be here.

As soon as our tea party began, the Earl has awoken the King's temper.

Seems like he hates it when the Earl is looking down on his son-in-law. Then he tried to put pressure on the Earl.

It was not intended to be a threat, but the Earl is still having a cold sweat. I will take it over from here. Just leave it to me. Hmm, if Masaru-dono himself said that.

What is this farce, I thought, but the Earl managed to save his face? Afterward, we talk a bit and he went home.

Like this, the Earl will not come here for a while and never again will he try to rope me into a strange thing.

Thank you so much, father-in-law.

The new line-up in our household has settled down in peace.

Tamara-chan is happy and in bliss with her newly-wed life.

I finally able to convince Lufutona-san that I'm not dangerous, and although she will not stay nearby me, now she shows up like normal.

Tamara-chan and Shira-chan are getting along well. Based on the follow up that I've received from my wives, seems like it happens because they were taken as slaves around the same time.

I personally train Shira-chan myself. There are limits to what I can train her for due to her slave status banning her from attacking her master, so she is just undergoing Sergeant-dono basic spartan training menu.

Earlier, she was pitted against Sati but now that I've understood her capability I see that she is unexpectedly strong and re-evaluate my assessment. It can't be helped if she looks inferior compared to Sati.

At first, the three of us, Taiga and Kuro are struggling to get along, but soon they got used to each other.

Although it is only within our house, Shira-chan enjoys taking Kuro for a walk. She really likes it, plus this makes it more secure at night.

The elves are aware that Kuro and the other are my summoned beasts, but that still makes them an unusual pet in other people's eyes.

Today as well, Shira-chan came to borrow Kuro.

"Milord, please lend me Kuro."

I don't like honorifics, so I don't mind her casual tone. I prefer it more like that.

“Sure, I will call it out at the front entrance.”

“Thank you!”

Then she proceeds to her patrol together while chatting with Kuro. Shira-chan who is usually tight shows a loose appearance when together with Kuro.

Due to her circumstances as a slave, she never shows her unhappiness, but normally she never shows any feeling and she only open up with Kuro.

She has a little complaint to me, otherwise I left a favourable impression to her. Sati-san is strong and cool. She is always cold toward me.

I should cut off the intuition soon so that I don't intrude her feeling, but she told me that she doesn't mind.....

I cannot tell Shira-chan that I've been listening to everything. What should I do?

I tried to ask everyone about it, but I was told that this is something between me and Shira-chan, so I should settle it by myself. When it comes to divine protection, I guess everyone cannot put any hand in the decision.

What do I want to achieve actually? I want to lend a hand. Shira-chan is a good and beautiful girl. Although she is under me for a short while, there is no reason the affection won't rise.



Shira-chan isn't that cold toward me like what I initially believe, so I will carefully take my time and capture her.

Sati insists that she wants to take a look at the guild's training ground in the fortress, so we went out.

If they have a good instructor there, then it won't hurt to ask for their teaching.

Of course, the Miyaga town also has an Adventurer Guild, however due to strong military presence there, not many adventurers come and there are less people.

When we arrived at the training ground, me and Sati are the only people there.

Lilia will make an uproar, so she is no good. Ellie is not interested and since she is busy, she already went home. Tilika and Ann are in Miyaga town for business purposes.

We didn't attract anybody's attention in the Adventurer Guild. Basically, only there is only a handful of people who know us. Although I've visited here many times to make a report for our hunt, all interactions were done in private room and nobody knows that I'm the adventurer who created a new village and became its lord yet.

"Isn't that the Wild Rabbit!"

But, as soon I entered the training ground, I was suddenly called out.

"H, heh?"

It's been a while since I was called the Wild Rabbit, so I was stumped.

When I look at the person who called me out, I noticed that their face is familiar somewhere. They are probably adventurers from Siory town. Why must we meet in a place like this.

"Oh, long time no see, uh."

"It's Parga. I don't know your name too, so we are in the same boat."

"Yeah. I'm Masaru, this is Sati."

From now on, I will eliminate the Wild Rabbit.

"Wow. Have you finally formed a party?"

Long time ago, when I haven't met Sati, I left Siory town alone. At that time, I was engaged in a deadly fight against the Wild Rabbit,

and I was still a small fry back then.

“Yeah, my party member and my wife.”

“Your wife, huh, isn’t that nice. So, are you coming here today to train? When did you arrive here?”

“Correct. I came here as an escort for the merchant caravan a little while ago, and since it is winter I’m having a short break.”

While we are talking, Parga’s acquaintance gathered around.

This Parga guy who gave me the Wild Rabbit nickname explained how I’m good with magic and has good hunting skill.

Seriously, it’s about time you stop calling me Wild Rabbit.....

My ability is already well known in Siory town and the Wild Rabbit nickname is almost gone. For it to rise again in such place.

“Let me introduce you to an instructor. Are you currently D rank?”

“Based on the recent evaluation I am currently B rank.....”

“B rank already! You are a mage, yet you climb the ladder awfully fast.”

“Eh, not really.”

Before I told him that I’m going to become A rank, he went to call the instructor. Whatever. No need to think so much about it.

Soon, we were introduced by Parga to someone who is supposed to be the best instructor here. As expected of a guild instructor, his arm is something else. Even his demeanour is no less.

“I’m Magsil. I heard you are from Siory. Is Vaught-dono in good health?”

Looks like fellow instructors are not up to date within themselves.

“He is doing just fine. We had a lot of company before we arrived here too.”

“Glad to hear that. I heard Siory is involved with horde of monsters too at Gorbass Fortress.”

“Yes. I was also involved in that fight. Mainly as a backup, though.”

He told me that if it's possible, he wants to hear about the story later.

“Does Masaru know about the battle at the Elf Country?”

“Yes.”

Not only am I aware, I even participated in it.

“I participated in that battle. You see, here.”

Then, he shows me a beautifully decorated sword.

An elf crafted one, eh. Does that mean he participated in the reinforcement team. If that's so, you have my humblest gratitude.

“Wow—”

I have many at home, but it wouldn't hurt to act surprised now and then.

“I can tell you all about it later, too!”

I already heard the tales many times from Titus, though.

But this time, it comes from the perspective of an adventurer, so I'm quite curious.

“Alright, for now show me what you guys are made of. Which one first?”

“Why don't you start first, Sati.”

“Okay!”

Sati overwhelmed instructor Magsil.

Well, that's about right. Sergeant-dono's level as an instructor is just too out of this world.

And thus, the adventurers who are spectating us raised their own name hoping to become a challenger——

The situation develops into something like during our time at Siory town. I already expect things to turn out this way.

Sati takes down all the challengers, one after another with brilliant moves. Sati's beautiful moves gradually turn to look like a dance. I'm the type who shows my full strength. Well, even Shira-chan is in love with Sati.

Right now, people are in winter vacation, so many adventurers who came to the training ground are queuing for their match. There are also many onlookers.

Although I'm not preoccupied with anything, I think it's better if I keep quiet.

"Your wife is damn awesome....."

"Yeah, she is the strongest. More importantly, regarding the story about the battle at the Elf Village....."

"Oh, that one. Where should we start?"

After a while, Sati came back when I was still listening to Parga-san's story.

Looks like she has defeated all the challengers. She wore a very satisfied face.

"Did you have a good time?"

"Yes, a lot!"

She sweats a lot.

"Even so, Sati-chan is very talented. I was surprised."

"Thank you so much. However, Masaru-sama is much stronger!"

Sati strongly declares in response to Parga's praise. Right in front of

everyone else too.

“What.....did you say.....!?”

“That he is stronger than this girl.”

“Have a match with me.”

“Oy stop that, you are going to die, you know!?”

I will never come here again. I swear.

Once Sati is satisfied, I decided to go eat together with instructor Magsil, Parga and his acquaintances.

Then, we talked about the defensive battle at Gorbas Fortress and that I'm going to rank up to A rank, too.

“Seriously, A rank? Weren't you a newbie who just registered a little while ago? No matter what kind of magician you are, it is too damn fast don't you think?”

“I am just lucky. I was caught into big battles one after another.”

Or it may be said as bad luck, too. Or maybe, just like Lilia mentioned before, it's fate.

“Even if that is the case.....”

Parga was surprised, however it's safe to guess that the instructor has probably heard about my A rank which is currently being reviewed.

I'm not trying to specifically hide it, and after today's commotion things will unfold very soon, so I told them about me becoming a lord right on the spot.

Then, I told them about my participation in the Elf Country battle. With this, I can convey my gratitude properly.

“So, the person who arrived earlier at the Elf Country with another route was Masaru. Titus-san said something similar, but I never heard about the details.

Seems like they managed to put everything under wrap nicely.

“The reinforcement squad that arrived at that time really save our asses.”

“Meh, don’t mind it. I already received plenty of thanks from the elves. More importantly, did you hear about the murder last week?”

“What about it?”

“An S rank Fire Mage who participated in the reinforcement forces to the Elf Country with me was killed. The Truth Official came here in search for the preparator, however they are not caught yet.”

Although crimes committed outside the town is common, it is unusual for murder to happen inside a town. Most of the time, the Truth Official will quickly unveil the suspect and catch them quickly.

“After putting all the info together, they said the suspect is a dark-skinned woman with a bountiful chest——”

The investigation defines the characteristic of a Dark Elf perfectly. They killed the Fire Mage.

Is the Demon revived already? Possibly.

“Their hair colours? No, not much information regarding that.”

Since hair colour can be easily dyed, it’s meaningless even if we know about it.

I listened to Parga and succumbed into deep thought.

There is only a victim, so their aim is most probably the person who participated in the previous war and defeated Earth Turtle King with Meteor.

I never hide the fact that I’m a Fire Mage, however here I’m known widely as an Earth Mage. Even if they did a preliminary research, I will never be included in their list.

Therefore, another competent Fire Mage who also participated in the

Elf Country's war was mistaken as me and got killed.

I feel bad for the Fire Mage; however, I think with this the killing has ended.

No, there I no proof that I'm their aim in the first place.....

For now, I'll inform about this matter to the elves.

It is never too late; so, once they sensed they are targeted by their enemy, the elves, the dark elf will never return to this place again. Martin is the Truth Official in charge of this place. I will listen to the details from him.

From here on the talk progress smoothly. I told how we fought alongside the elves as their escort, but I never go into the specific. I showed him the bow that I received from the elves. All that the dark elf know is that over 100 adventurers were involved as reinforcement. It's hard to distinguish between them.

"I heard he was stabbed by a knife. He is also an S rank, yet he dies very quickly, seriously."

Right. You cannot escape death.

As expected I should start drafting a plan to the Kingdom. Just in case, I better leave this place for a while.

"The target, a Fire Mage has passed away."

When I informed that to the monster, I heard a ripe mumbling, gu~gugugugugugu~~ as an answer.

Did I make a mistake? Even if he is a King, how dare he order me with that kind of attitude, what nerve!

But I quietly repressed my anger.

“I cannot say for sure. I didn’t manage to double check the suspect identity before killing him. But that is due to your failure to give me the details of his features. It took me a lot of trouble to find him.”

Again, the ripe voice resounded.

“People are indistinguishable from one another. There are not many S Rank Fire Mage around, so a mistake is highly unlikely.”

If only the Harpies were not defeated that time, we were not left with these ambiguous testimonies. If they have relayed the information from one to another, it would not turn so complicated. Thanks to our reconnaissance the report has been fragmentary.

If left unattended, in the future, there is a great chance that this person will become a huge hurdle for us, hence the reason we are putting out that human Fire Mage now. Others were fussing about that persons magic, but at that standard it is pretty normal for an average elf. But, defeating the Earth Turtle King and burning down the battlefield several times with Meteor, it was said that this is the work of a single man, and it is absurd.

Well, the truth is that story no longer matters. Now that he is dead, he will no longer pose as a hurdle and bring disaster to us.

The ripe voice continues,

“To begin with, it is due to the failure of causing disturbance at the other side with the locusts. The practical tests done on the Earth Turtle King were a success and if the adventurers didn’t come there, the elves would lose!”

The locusts were just an excuse. The main reason for our defeat lies in our fault for misreading the elf’s strength. Those years in peace doesn’t rust their strength.

However, I’ve taken a look into the locusts as well, but for some reason there were no fuss or rumours about that matter flying around at all. There is no mistake that it was headed towards a big populated human village.

Should I continue monitoring?

But the result was doubtful from the start, so in the end it is not justifiable since it's not going to be of use.

The ripe voice protests.

"I understand, I understand. As desired, the Fire Mage that burned you guys was dealt with. We also wish to protect the survival of our clan. Maybe in 20 years, we will have enough numbers to lead into war?"

It is a pity that 80% of the warriors among our clan were grinded for good, yet I feel no remorse. That is a fair price to pay to topple down the Elf Country. Anyway, the number will soon increase again.

A louder voice than the ripe one resounded, and a bigger than ordinary Orc, the monster called the Orc King raised its ugly body that was scarred with burns.

"Hoh? What, if you want vengeance, do not do it by yourself. They are still alerted with me, so we don't want their attention directed here until my job is over."

There are too many elves around here. I cannot afford to take any more risks as I still have many jobs left in other places. Although it also serves as a test for the anti-magic shell, I cannot cling into private revenge forever.

After waiting for the monsters to leave, I muttered.

".....just you wait."

The elves are definitely my family, and they will receive the punishment for the deceased dark elves. During that time, the clan at the hometown will be under our feet, and us the stronger clan will rule over.

Make sure to enjoy the rest remaining of your life.

The end is almost near——

Chapter 4 ~ Return to Siory

Although the amount of works is piling like a mountain, the residents have begun living here without trouble and the farmland cultivation has started.

Next, Olba san serve as the village head, and we also receive supports from the elves.

The presence of the elf is somewhat problematic, but the merit of their presence here is high.

When the village was finally open for migration, we were improving the roads for the sake of convenience when, we were spotted by onlookers.

It's uncommon for the elf to help constructing a building (my castle), the elf also helps producing delicious spring water flowing from the spirit fountain for free. When we are short of people during the process of land reclamation for the village, we asked for elf manpower to guard the gate and for security. Unlike the fortress where the elf is sparse, their whereabouts can be easily spotted here, hence the increase of visitors.

Whether it be the migrant's acquaintance or visitors, many people are considering settling down here.

Admission fee to enter the village is something that is unavoidable, however there are too many people beyond our expectation, so we put a restriction upon admission which emphasize on people with "talent" only, and thus the collection begins.

I didn't charge the Adventurer Guild to start their business in this village. I also decided not to take any money from members of the Commercial Guild who comes for business.

Ever since I stricken the rule, many guests refused to leave early since they feel like it is a waste, and their number is still increasing. This causes shortage in inns and dining places.

Then, the number of merchants has increased. A lot.

Including their bodyguards and loading personnel, we allow two people per one member of Commercial Guild, but many has come under the guise of trade to evade the admission fee, and there are also tourists who come for sightseeing and at the same time acting like peddler bringing in merchandise. Even so, the proper merchants are conducting their business properly. Due to the condition imposed on the Commercial Guild, the number of actual merchants are smaller compared to the guests because only less people actually care about paying the admission fee.

We were preparing a dedicated place for those merchants and few days later, a small market under the blue sky was completed. The market is attracting more customers, which resulted in the increase of application from other merchants wanting to open small business and the number of applicants from migrant.

At this moment, I'm seriously glad that I've made the village slightly larger.

Anyway, thanks to the elf, the income and expenditure of this village has seen a positive boost just from the entrance fee alone. It is an unlikely amount for a village that has just opened up.

“There are various things that I'm worried about, so I'm going to come back here every day. It will be fine even if I'm gone for a long trip.”

My plan is to use the Gate to come back to this village and sleep in my mansion at night.

Since I'm officially not here, I cannot show myself because I need to maintain the consistency where I am away. For the time being, the Gate is a top secret.

Ellie agreed that we should avoid being seen as much as possible. They were shocked when I told them the story about what the dark elf is doing in secret.

Especially Drago, we should avoid summoning him at all cost if we don't want to be exposed.

“Well then everyone, please do your best during my absence.”

In front the entrance hall stood our housemaids and the elves, Olba san and Nania san in a row, while my party members are obviously following me. The others are watching over the house.

“Yes, please take care.”

Both Titus and Patos are reluctant to watch over the house, but they relented since this journey act as life lesson for Lilia. But the plan is to take everyone to the Kingdom once we have reached there. The reason is because that is when the festival is going to start at the Kingdom.

““Take care.””

“Alright, we are leaving!”

The Gate activated, and we arrived at the cellar under our house in Siory town.

Thus, Lilia first ever journey ended in less than a second.

We are staying here for two days, and on the third day we will embark to the Kingdom.

On the way to the Kingdom, we will fly there with Lilia's magic. We are expected to arrive there after two days, a day before the festival commence. The festival will be held for 10 days.

“It's too dusty in here. Let's clean up first.”

Under Ann's command, everyone began cleaning.

Nevertheless, we are simply required to do a basic clean up and finish. If we plan to stay long, of course we need to clean up properly, however, this time we are just staying for two days and at night we are sleeping at our mansion at the village. Simple clean up.

I am in charge of cleaning the bath and the toilet. I also put out everyone's bags properly, taking out two days' worth of food and living utensils, and overall my works finished in less than five minutes.

When I searched around the garden, I get a response from my Detection. Maybe this is around the time when Will is having his rest for today.

I went out to the garden and called out Will.

"Big bro! You are back!"

"Only for two days. I am going to attend the festival at the Kingdom."

"Wow—, that sounds really nice."

"Are you having an off day today?"

"You see, one of our members got hurt. Since it's just about the right time, I decided to take a vacation for a while. So, I decided to leave out while they go to the Kingdom."

"You can go with me then."

"But the money....."

There is renting a coach and lodging so it must cost some money. Even I don't have that much excess money to spare.

When asked, he said that his income is covering his living expenses and also his equipment, so it is not easy to save money.

In the previous subjugation request, they are teamed up with a veteran party, hence the risk is minimal, and the reward money is good. Unfortunately, his party member was injured so the profit margin from the reward is reduced to cover up treatment cost. Things doesn't go well.

Well, it's wonderful to see him taking it seriously.

“It’s not like I really care about the festival anyhow. I have always been watching a big festival like it in the Empire. Even if I go see the festival in the Kingdom now, I.....”

“You, just now, did you say about your friends going?”

“Yes.”

It is the biggest festival in the country and even if he cannot afford, why would they leave him behind?

“Are you going along well with your friends?”

“Just.....we got into a small fight.”

Seems like the quarrel has something to do with the injured person.

“Well, you can help watch over the house for now, and don’t forget your training.”

Their head will cool off as time has gone by.

“Please take me to the Kingdom’s capital too—”

“If the number of people increases, the fly movement will turn bad, so I rather not. Plus, this is a family trip.”

Our final destination is Ellie’s hometown, but after we finish seeing the festival at the Kingdom, we are going to see the Empire next. This plan is like a holiday trip for us, so an acquaintance like him is going to be a bother.

“No way—”

“Besides, you have been living in our garden for forever now. When do you plan to grow up and stand on your own feet?”

“Wuu.....I’m trying my best...”

“Hm, you are a little dirty. The bath.....no, how do you go to toilet in the first place?”

The garden only has a well in it. Since the house is locked, not only

he cannot use the bathroom, he cannot use the toilet too.

“As for bath, I’m wiping myself with a wet towel and as for toilet, I share one with the neighbour who has the big one.”

You are a nuisance to our neighbour.....no, what did he said? A bigger one?

Then, the one here is the smaller one.....

“Will, from today onward, you are permitted to use this house bath and toilet. You can use the kitchen once we leave to the Kingdom. But you can only use it when necessary and use them cleanly, okay? You are absolutely forbidden to step foot on the second floor. You can continue sleeping here.”

This guy will never go near the Gate, so it’s fine. He is usually outside for request and by night he is staying at the garden.

As far as it goes, he is another candidate to receive divine protection. The others will not be opposed to it.

“Dang, you serious! Thank you, big bro!”

“Make good money, and afterward search for an inn.”

“O’ course I’ll! But then, does that mean big bro is not coming back home yet?”

Not for the time being.

“After this, what I’m going to do and what I’m telling you is a secret.”

This is a thing that I’m only willing to tell close acquaintance and I usually asked them to keep it with themselves. Though they can easily discover it once they investigate a little. They will be more suspicious the more I try to hide it anyway. As long the information doesn’t spread too much and doesn’t attract some unwanted attention, it’s good enough.

“O’ course I’ll.”

“I’ve created a village outside there. And I’ve decided to become the lord.”

“Eh, you’ve made a village? But you have only been there for three months at most, right?”

Minus the travelling time, I think around two months.

“At first, I was asked to assist with making some houses and farmlands by using my Earth Magic, but afterward they asked me to make a similar village. Well, it is a small village.”

“As expected, you’re the best, big bro!”

“So that’s it. We already paid the rent for this house in advance, but after that we’re thinking of terminating the contract.”

Truthfully speaking, I want to keep this place for the sakes of the Gate, however I don’t want to pamper this boy too much.

“Then, after you went to the Kingdom, just like that you’re going back straight to that village, big bro?”

“We are going to the Empire next. I have to greet Ellie’s parent at their family’s house.”

“Do you know where Ellie neesan parent house is?”

“If I was not mistaken, they should be nearby Pisco’s region.”

“Woah. Isn’t that on the opposite direction from the Empire? They are awfully far away.”

Well, distance is not a problem. It is a one-way trip and we are going to fly.

“Oh really? You see, I don’t really know about the Empire’s geography that well.”

One thing that I know about the Empire geographically is that it is nearby the Kingdom. Perhaps I should prepare a map soon. I’ve found a map before, but I don’t consider buying them because they are sold

roughly pricier than the source material.

“Erm like this, the Kingdom is here, meanwhile the Empire is.....”

While explaining to me, Will drew a huge map on the ground. Truly what you can expect from the noble's family young master, very well educated.

“Oh my, that is one quite accurate map.”

I don't know whether Ellie did finish her cleaning properly or did she escape outside, but now she is here in the garden.

“Hello there, Ellie san. I'm currently explaining the location of Ellie parent's house.”

Ellie joined in and completes the rest of the map. The map is quite a good one since it covers major town and highways.

“It turns out quite well. Let's show this to everyone.”

Ellie came back after calling everyone and then she explains the location of her parent's house, and what route should we take to go there.

“Now that you mentioned it, where is Will parent's house?”

“In the middle of Imperial Capital.”

“If not mistaken, you told us that you hail from an old noble's house, right? A placenta (法衣?) noble?”

Roughly said, the placenta (法衣?) noble is an aristocrat who does not own any territory and is working in bureaucracy.

“No, I mean, we have territory.....”

“Territory nearby the Empire Capital.....you, what is your family name?”

“That is, uh, kinda.”

“What, is it something that you cannot say?”

“Err well.”

Is he a big young master from a big noble family?

Must be awkward for him. Or perhaps they are in big debt with mafia or a bad household.

“No matter what your identity is, you are still you. That’s why tell us.”

This is interesting. Let’s make him spill it out.

“Will you keep it a secret even after I tell you?”

“Definitely, neither I nor anyone else here will tell anyone. Right, Tilika.”

“I guarantee.”

So, Tilika said.

“.....it’s Galley.”

“Fu—n?”

Of course, that name is new to me. It sounds like a fish name.

“Eh, is that all? That is a lukewarm response. I thought it’s more.....”

“That Galley household, was it a big noble?”

“Eh!? Don’t tell me you seriously don’t know them.”, Lilia shocked.

Even if you said that.

“Ellie, do you know?”

“Yeah, I know them. By “Galley” do you mean that Galley?”

Looks like Ellie recognize that name. Although it feels like an interesting thing until a while ago, for some reason, the atmosphere has turned serious right now.

“It’s just a Galley.”

“In the end, what is this all about?”

“Masaru, what is the Empire called?”

“Hu—h?”

“It is Galley Empire.”

“Ooh!”

I hit my hand now that all the pieces are here. Will, so you are a prince. Damn amazing.

“Only direct descendent of the Galley emperor are eligible to bear that name. If anyone name themselves as such carelessly, they will land into a big trouble.”

“Wow!”

“Are you for real, big bro.”

“No, you see, everyone keeps on calling it Empire this and Empire that. Nobody called it Galley Empire until just now you know?”

“Even if it was like that.....”

Ah, now I feel like a clown. But more importantly now, Will!

“I was born in a very faraway country. It’s still recently that I have come here. If I tell you that I came from Japan capital, Tokyo, you will not understand too, right?”

“I certainly don’t know where this JAPAN and TOKYO is.”

“Yeah, yeah, we are all aware that Masaru is not familiar with the geography in this neighbourhood.”

“No, no, this is important too you know? Listen, Will. Even I was _____”

“Our discussion is not progressing, so keep silent please, Masaru!”

“Ah kay.”

Ellie lost her temper. Rather than focusing too much on Will sudden prince development, you should prioritize my sanctity more.

“Even so, it seems that you were forgiven.”

Although he has been away from home, it seems like he has been in contact with his brother recently. Yet after that, there is no effort to bring him back, so I’m thinking if he is here with the connivance of his brother. If there is search party for him then things will be unpleasant.

“Actually, I don’t have that much right for throne inheritance.”

“How long were you in the line?”

“I’m the eight princes, so umm, if not mistaken, twentieth place?”

“You have nothing to do with the throne anymore, don’t you? Right now, you are an inspiring adventurer.”

Even with this reveal, noble or not, it doesn’t change who he is in this neighbourhood.

Lilia is in the second line for the throne, too.

“That’s correct!”

“Right now, this guy is simply a poor, budding adventurer. He has no time to worry about his household.”

I can understand the hardship of hiding one identity. For him to be frank with us shows how deep his trust is. Suddenly changing how we treat this prince will be a poor decision.

“Big bro.....”

And it is painful for me to change my attitude just because right now I am aware that he is a prince. I will absolutely, never do it.

“Will is Will. You are just fine staying that way.”

Will is the grandson of the current king, and his father is currently the one in line for the throne succession. That's what we get to know from him. If a person is acquainted with Will, that guy can use that connection to execute whatever scheme that he wants.

So naturally, I will keep this a secret, and I decided to interact with him just like ordinary. Casually treating him just like usual is good enough. Plus, even the person in question is pleased with that.

By the way, since it is an Empire, why is it ruled by a royal family? While I'm having this doubt, the descendent of that emperor is right beside me, and he seems anxious.

When the talks finishes, Ellie pulled me to the shade a little away from everyone.

"Masaru, Masaru. Keep winning over Will. We can use him."

"What are you going to use him for."

"He is going to be our "pipe" to the royal family."

"Hm—m. I thought you dislike that guy."

"Let's put that aside for now. So far, there is nothing special between you guys, but for now he seems to be attached to Masaru, and I guess it's possible for him to receive the divine protection too, right? That's why be gentle with him."

"Especially his household, isn't that your target?"

"No way. Not now. I admit that kind of thought did crossed my mind, but for now I'm thinking for our sake. I think it's better to have more insurance in case anything happens to us."

Indeed, if there is some trouble brewing during our time in Empire, the situation might be able to be resolved quickly if Will is there.

"I'm in the same boat too, you know? For running away from home. I will never think about forcing him to do something for us."

"Well, since he is going to be useful, I just hope he will kindly comply

when the times come.”

Anyway, as for Will, he only has today and tomorrow to spend some time with me, and there is also this thing about protection.

“Ah, so this person is your latest wife.....woah, an Elf!?”

While I was talking with Ellie, Will finally recognized Lilia.

“Ah, that girl’s name is Lilia. She is my new wife.”

“I am the first princess of the Elven royal family, second in the right of succession. Liliane Dora Bettycoat Yamano!”

“An elf Princess!? Big bro, you truly rock!”

This guy, is he really a prince?

Lilia too, you should not carelessly throw your real name away. Maybe this time she has a sense of rivalry with Prince Will.

For the time being, I will approach Will gently later during our bath time, but for now we are going out. I have to greet the people in towns.

On the road, Ellie tells me about the Empire. I read about their history from a book once, but that is on paper, so I don’t know about the current affair very well.

The Empire is the second oldest surviving state and they are the largest and the strongest state in name and reality. Its national strength is ten times stronger than the Kingdom. Their military forces are just as strong. From a magic university to higher institution for noble to Empire Theatre. They are the centre of the world where academics and culture are developing.

With both Galley royal family and Truth Palace there, other than the last demon invasion which the hero has repulsed, no other big crisis has happened. The strong and excellent pedigree of righteous royal family has governed the state into stability.

Currently, they have no intention to expand their territory and their

relationship with the neighbouring state is flourishing.

So, even if his chance of succession is low due to him being the eighth prince, as the prince of the world's largest nation, he still retains enough power to blow away neighbouring lords. He can do it anytime he wants to.

The Galley Empire has a strong military and enormous territory. Compared to the country on Earth, would it resemble the USA or Russia?

"Hoho. So, he was saved by a hair breadth when he was attacked by the monsters in the forest, and it turns out that he is the Prince of the Empire. Don't tell me you think it is a simple coincidence?"

When she put it that way, my encounters with Will sound like something like a destiny.

"It was fated!"

"Correct, it is fate. Perhaps, this is not something that you can sever, you know?"

"You serious....."

"As soon as you calmed down, someone will teach him magic. I mean, Masaru."

"Ee—h?"

"There is also the divine protection. Can Masaru do it?"

"I don't mind if a guy like him receive the divine protection."

Once they received the divine protection, even if they learned only some skills, they will be very strong.

"Apart from Will's family household circumstances, we honestly need more people who possessed divine protection."

Since my slave experiment failed, without a doubt, a candidate person like him is very precious to me. Even if they are a guy.

“Guess what, let’s think about it later. I am currently busy right now.”

When troubled, withhold it. Postpone any trouble that don’t require immediate resolve. Think about it later.

First, I visited the shrine.

As soon we arrived, Ann was surrounded by the orphans.

And since Lilia is too eye catching, she was also surrounded.

Lilia seems accustomed to this situation, saying “Hey, hey, no touching. Only see.”, properly keeping the kids at bay.

Not wanting to lose, I take out a pile of souvenirs. Naturally, they are foods and the monster’s meats. Drawn by their appetite, the children quickly swarm over.

“Sister Angela! Sister Angela—!”

“It’s an elf! There is an elf!”

“Amazing—! Meat! There are so many meats!”

They welcomed us with big hands and now there is chaos.

I decided to settle down and hold my solo appreciation for the time being. I will talk with the adult afterward. First, I will win these excited children respects first.

The story that I told them, well, half is truth and half made up.

During our journey, the merchant groups that we travelled with were attacked by bandits and monsters and we defeated them, and after we reached at the destination, we helped the elf to defeat the terrorizing dragon.

“Due to all that achievement, I was promoted to A rank.”

I show them my guild card.

““Ooooooh, amazing—!””

These children are local inhabitants of this world. They have better understanding of how great rank A is, compared to me.

Then, I ushered them to the garden.

“Yes. I’m taking out something awesome, so you young kids make some space.”

Once I finished evacuating the kids, I took out the dragon neck. This is the one that was defeated by me and Sati, the one with its neck severed to piece.

““Waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!?”

Even after the warning, some pissed in their pants, some broke into tears, but that can’t be helped. This earth dragon, even with its neck severed, they are as big as a house.

“Is this really big brother doing!?”

“Yeah. With a single slash of the black sword that I’ve shown to you guys before. Well~, this guy was really tough. That sword got broken, and I was even prepared for death. However, to save the elves, I braced myself and stood up.”

“Woo—! Woo—!”

Among these kids, I wonder if someone here have potential to receive divine protection? If possible, I want a cute girl.....but naturally, I am well accepted only among the boys.

After that, I have a serious conversation among the adults.

And Ann, she explained how we cannot remain in this town since we are moving our base.

“Wherever you are, we are all family members connected with the shrine. Sister Angela, as the member of our family and our shrine, please do your best to remain yourselves at the new place.”

“Yes, Sister Matilda.”

Next, we went to the Adventurer Guild and greet the receptionist. Sergeant dono is currently absent. He went to the Kingdom. Both Crook and Silva also went to the Kingdom. So, everyone is going to the festival, huh? And those two, they leave a memo on which inn they are taking at the Kingdom. In this case, it will be easier to hook up.

Then I meet the well-acquainted guild vice chief. Since the news about my A rank assessment inquiry has naturally reached here, I was celebrated for my promotion.

I also visited Sati slave’s associate who went to our wedding. Since they are closely related to me and Sati, we two parted with everyone at the Adventurer Guild and went there alone.

We arrived at a big shop. They seem to be in various trade, from groceries to miscellaneous goods.

We told them how we have just created a new village and how I have become the lord, and we also talk about how we are going to settle down over there. The oneesan who taught Sati plenty of stuff, Selma san genuinely delighted with the news while the fourth girl, Adria was surprised and asked about a lot of things regarding the village.

“I see, the village is nearby to Elf Forest. Doesn’t that mean you can get elves made items?”

“I don’t think there is anything that we cannot get, but.....”

Currently, the Earl is monopolizing the trade for elves made items. Even if he is not, the exports are currently stalled due to the difficult situation faced by the Elf Country. Personally, I can get as many that I want, but as for trading items.....

“Even if you are the lord, doesn’t mean you can make that decision, huh. Does your village have any special product?”

“Tasty drinking water, I think.”

“.....sorry to hear that. If you have any indispensable materials, feel free to reach out here. It might not be affordable to me, but I will study the price.”

“Thank you so much.”

It's the correct decision to leave Lilia at the guild. If she met the real elf, I doubt she will hesitate to gobble them up.

I lightly greeted the inn manager. She was the one who offer an assistance when I just arrived here. Finally, I greeted the soldiers who are guarding the gate. The captain is precisely at his usual spot nearby the gate. This is the first different world person that I have come into contact. It is nostalgic when I think about it.

“You are already an A rank now huh.....it feels like yesterday when you came back here every day, losing to the Wild Rabbits.”

When I remember the first time I arrived here, it feels quite impressive. Well, my level was very low at that time.

“This is a present for you.”

With that said, I take out a big lump of meat with a size of a cushion. It's 50 kilograms worth of dragon meat. The meat worth about one-month salary for ordinary soldier and they are very delighted to receive food as a present.

“It was taken down by two people only!? And by a sword alone, too! You run out of mana, again? Even after you get stronger, the way you do things never change.....hey ladies, make sure you take care of your man very carefully, understood?”

I was the one who took the dragon out in that battle, yet these people are still worried about me.....but hey, it's understandable since the situation will turn deadly if Sati didn't manage to save me on time.

In the evening, I cooked Will a meal and listen to his recent stories and tell him about mine too. I tell him not to tell anyone, and I believe Will can keep a secret. Although the part about the Elf

Country was largely omitted, I tell him in great details about the other.

“Wow, big bro, you really are awe—some!”

His impression on me that went low during the incident where I’m not aware of the Empire’s name the other day is recovered now.

“I will not be surprised anymore even if big bro turned out to be a big shot.”

Well, it is just a talk. I wonder if our interaction would change if this guy didn’t throw away his identity as a prince.

“I was born in a distant country. At my country, the royal system was abolished, and the country was managed by a citizen elected parliament. That is why even if one is a royalty, they don’t have much authority.”

I think the princess is wonderful but could care less about the prince.

“If not mistaken, the country run on Tōhō Kokka-gun parliament system.....”

“Of course, the former royal family, as well their family line of nobility remains, but more importantly is their ability as a person, their true merit.”

“That sounds like a nice country”

“Yeah. It is a nice country.”

Recently, the thought about returning back to Japan never hit me much. Well, I got married and I built a house. Moreover, I have my own maids. I couldn’t ask for any more happiness than this.

“But life in this place is not bad either.”

Except for the oversize landmine called destruction of the world.

“You’re right. There are some painful things, but I feel more alive here compared to the time spend at my home.”

This guy almost died when I found him, and even during his training he was half-dead. I don't get how he can feel so lively.

"But unlike me, who is busy arranging my own equipment and crying, big bro hones his ability and made a village....."

I really wish that it was only due to my ability alone. The others, even with the divine protection, I'd say they put their own hard work. When told by those who are unaware of this situation, my heart aches a little.

Even this guy, if he got a hold of divine protection, he might end up better than me. He has a social status and his basic specifications seems higher than me, plus he is still young.

After thinking about it for a moment, I concluded that I'm not that good, but I cannot say it.

"Hm. Now, you see, I was always saved by the others, and I say fighting with your own is not easy."

"Do you really think so?"

"Correct. Will, you need to take care of your partners too, okay? A trustworthy partner is the most important treasure in this harsh world."

"Yes, big bro."

Giving advices as a superior while sipping alcohol is quite enjoyable.

The rest of the day, I brought Will to the garden, and properly turn in the bed after returning to the village.

A large bed in a large room without any worry of being disturbed. With my beloved bride.

This is my house. My new home.

The next day, I went back to Siory town earlier and took breakfast there. After that, I oversee Will's swordsmanship, then I took Lilia

around town.

After a long absence, I went out to hunt Wild Rabbit in the afternoon. The village is surrounded by forests, so there are not enough meadows to attract the Wild Rabbit.

And after all that I've said, the decision was made. Will is going to follow us to the Kingdom, and no objection.

I talked to Lilia about it before, and it seems that Ellie has some money stashed.

Though, a fate, him and me.

If something like destiny really existed, there is no way the story ended after I finished helping this guy.

Ellie planned to use him, but there is a high chance that we are going to get involved with his messes.

Though, from the story that I have listened so far, the Empire has found it peace.....

Chapter 5 ~ Kingdom Capital

Alms

I have decided not to mind Will too much. There is also a thing about the divine protection and him too.

Ellie thinks he is necessary, and even Lilia believe that friendship with Will might prove beneficial for us.

“Even if he doesn’t receive the divine protection, 10 years later, or even 50 years later, I’m sure he will hold a significant power inside the Empire.”

If only he received divine protection, then I’m sure he will hold great power in the Empire.

Regardless of what will happen after 50 years, I sure could use some help towards something that is going to happen by the end of 20 years later. I don’t want a guy, but even if he received the divine protection, there is no actual need to put him inside our party. This guy can remain in his current party.

“O’ wind!”

Once we are outside from the town, Lilia activates her Fly. One of our plans was to summon out my horse and attached it to a carriage, but the downside is the vast difference in speed, plus it is not uncommon for a magician to use Fly.

“Wo—w, so this is the Spirit Magic!”

The wind enwrapped everyone gently and Will is excited when we start flying.

Seems like there is no elf in the Empire.

“There used to be a time when we called the demi human prosecutors

in the Empire as an ape.”

They used to call for hatred against demi human such as the elf, beastmen and dwarf. Then, these demi human cooperate with the Kingdom, who was once another regional territory within the Empire, and fight a war for their independence. Due to that merit, the elf territory within the border of the land is recognized and now they led a life of prosperity.

The beastmen and the dwarves used to have a territory of their own, but instead they start to disperse and lived in a cooperation with human beings, hence their territory didn't turn into a country like the elf.

“I never heard about such stories anymore nowadays, though.....”

“We lived a long life. There are some of us who personally witness the cruelties during the rough time.”

Because of that, the elf did not interact with the Empire very much, and with the Kingdom located between them geographically, they only keep the most minimum necessary approach.

“How could I say it, sorry.”

“Well, it was something of the past generation that has nothing to do with neither us, or you, Will.”

Feeling bored, we chatted while in flight.

We are still on the lookout occasionally, but there is little danger because we are headed to the royal capital of the Kingdom along the highway which has good security.

Since the highway is well maintained, there are plenty of places to rest and to stay.

Even without any night travel, or without hiring any escorts, we can reach the Kingdom without much difficulties.

“Hey, so I've been thinking.”

So, I told Ellie during our break.

“I’ve been thinking, wouldn’t it be easier if I go to the capital together with Lilia alone, and fetch you guys with the gate afterward?”

That way I don’t need to bring Will along.

“In case anything happens, it’s better if everyone is here, you know.”

She has a point. This time the trips feel very peaceful. However, this is still a dangerous different world. Wherever we are, dangers are looming against us. I must make sure to never forget that.

“Besides, isn’t it fun when everyone is here?”

Lilia is in her travelling mood. Then everyone else nod, agreed with what she said.

Everyone is in the mood for travelling right now. Though, we do encounter some monsters every now and often.

Let’s proceed from here with caution.....

We can reach the Kingdom by a day if we rush the travel, but I find it pleasant to spend overnight outside in the middle of our journey and that is our plan.

Sadly, during this period, the Kingdom is visited by lots of people so no matter which accommodation we go they are fully packed. We cannot find any satisfactory room.

Will get the straw bedding at the stable. I’m not trying to be mean, just that there are not enough rooms around.

As for us we get a room with two single bed inside.

Nevertheless, Lilia was overjoyed to get this narrow, crumbling room.

“This is what I call the life of an adventurer!”

Though, her face quickly turns complicated once we ordered the

cheap set of meals at the lodging.

A diluted soup and hard bread. A sad excuse compared to the meats and vegetables accompanied by grain risotto. The amount is enough for everyone, but the taste is not something spectacular, but they aren't bad either. Prince Will is eating them obediently. He can barely eat it, so it is apparent that the prince is also having some difficulties. Princess Lilia follows other people example, leaving behind her unwillingness and start to eat.

Well, just like that, we continue to enjoy our trip, and as the pedestrian traffic increases, we often heard "what is that!" from below. The number of fingers pointed towards the sky increases. Right before the afternoon of the second day, we reached at the largest city inside the Kingdom of Alms, Lisur.

A splendid rampart spreads around the whole city for as far as I can see. The fact that there are several layers of wall inside made me think how much rebuild this rampart has seen in its lifetime. The suburbs are filled with spaciouly wide farmlands. There is a long queue waiting to enter the big gate.

Of course, I will enter through the gate like normal.

My turn came out after 30 minutes lining up in the queue, and after they checked my Guild Card and collected the admission fee, I was finally let in.

Even after looking at my A Rank Guild Card, the guard didn't particularly respond, as if used to it. They aren't particularly bothered with the elf as well. Just, the fact that Tilika is getting the stink eye wherever she goes doesn't changes here.

Right after passing through the gate, we arrived at a square. It is filled with people swarming over the stalls. There were streets performer and minstrels. Indeed, we are in festive atmosphere.

Sati who just arrived at the Kingdom capital for the first time is curious and restless. It is the first time for Lilia too, but she is still calm. The others have arrived here before.

This is certainly my first time here but compared to the doujin festivals and the city's hustle and bustle where I have experienced many times before, this amount is still cute.

For now, I'll hold Sati's hand, so she won't get lost in the crowd.

"Which one is the elf mansion?"

We are staying at the elf mansion during our stay in the Kingdom. Plus, it was arranged originally for Lilia to use during her training.

"The area from here on is the heart of this kingdom, home to the nobles and royal palace."

We walked for quite a long distance while sightseeing and at the end we arrived at the noble district, divided from the general district with a wall and the entrance is guarded with security.

For the normal citizen, without a referral or prior notice, they are subjected to troublesome procedure at the entrance such as body check and answering questions. Even after that, they still cannot enter without the authorization from the noble district inhabitants. It is that strict.

But this time we are not subjected to such troublesome thing. When we said we wanted to go to the elf mansion, we were allowed a permission right away.

"We received the message from the elf. One elf and one beastmen. Five women and two men? There is one extra compared to the message that we received.....did you add him later? Are you here to see the festivals? Well, it is not a problem. Let us guide you to the elf mansion."

The process has gone smoothly due to notice from the referral letter that was sent earlier. Even if there is an additional one person, things like this is common during the festival period.

It is fine to wear equipment and weapon in this district. They are not explicitly alarmed; they are more focused on restricting the civilian's access.

The noble district is visibly different compared to the general area. It has luxurious mansions standing side by side, and the beautifully paved road extends to the end giving birth to an inexplicable charm for this district.

There are few people on the street and those people look elegant. The shop in the street seems to be high-class and it looks stylish. The sightseeing guests are surely going to intrude on the shop once the access is open.

The elf mansion is a splendid residence with spacious plot of land even among the other noble mansion in this district. Once the front gate opened, we were welcomed by the elf and they guide us inside.

“Welcome home!”

At the entrance, we were greeted by 30 elves in total.

“It has been a great journey, thank you for your work. We will guide you to your room. Please relax and relieve your exhaustion from your trip.”

It is a long way, but it is far from a great journey. It only takes two days by air travel. Hunting in the forest for days is more tiring compared to this. Well the elves here are not aware of the situation.

“Umu. However, I’m going out of the country to here for training. I don’t need the excessive treatment.”

“Of course, we are aware of it.”

We were assigned to a suite room. There are bedrooms, living rooms, a set of one room for attendant use, and luxurious rooms for guests.

Our room was designed to hold a great number of people at once, as if saying there will be no special treatment, like that.

“Ah, please assign this guy to a separate place. He is okay with either a stable or the garden.”

I asked for another place to be prepared for Will when he tries to enter with us.

“Eh, ah, yes. If possible, not a luxurious place.....”

I’ve declared that I won’t give him the prince treatment. I am a man of my word.

“Is he your escort?”

I wonder? He is not a friend, nor a disciple. As far as I can tell, he is just an acquaintance, someone that I saved and a person that I am taking care off. Just who is this guy?

“He is Masaru’s pal. Just an ordinary adventurer who came to the Kingdom to sightseeing together. Please assign him to an appropriate room.”

“Understood, Riri sama.”

I see. Other people perceive him as my pal. Well it is safer that way.

After we settled down in the room, we are meeting with the elves from the kingdom.

There are several precautions and several things that we need to check while staying here. The letter contained highly classified information, and to avoid uneasiness, it says that only Lilia is coming to visit here.

We are staying in the Kingdom until the festival is over. I’ve been busy with the village creation for a while now, so this is a long-awaited vacation.

Lilia is currently in a journey of life lesson so there is no need for excessive entertainment. But, as expected, they are very particular about handling the coming elf, especially since this time they are a member of royal family. They aren’t treating her like some child from a branch family.

The crisis at the country and our work. Lilia got married and dropped the plan from going for the life journey. Gate magic.

“You can use the Gate!?”

“Umu. We are offering it to everyone who wish to go back home during our stay here.”

This is not a simply temporary return; we are going to take this opportunity to consult with the country for the need of changing some personnel.

“Of course, we are appreciative with the offer.”

“Next, there is a movement from the evil side in relation to the battle at the country.”

The God divine protection. An assassination of an S Rank Fire Mage, which might be the works of the demons. Although only the King is aware of Masaru’s oracle, majority of the elves are aware of Masaru divine protection.

“I see. We will take the utmost effort to make sure this information is kept confidential. In case you receive such information while in the kingdom, I hope five of you wouldn’t move on your own; please notify us first.”

The elves residing here are all elite magic units. They were sent here as part of agreement for defense cooperation by the kingdom and Elf Country. Their scope of job covers from exploration to demons hunting.

“What about that adventurer called Will?”

“He is just your run in a mill adventurer that has nothing to do with this matter at all. He doesn’t even know about the Gate. He is simply here for a visit, and he will not be a trouble, so he can be left alone.”

He deserves to get the guest of honour treatment based on his real social status, but I cannot tell anyone about Will’s circumstance.

“Understood. And next,”

First, we are having lunch. Then we receive warm reception from the elves.

Right past afternoon, we will go out to the Kingdom’s capital. We

have some errands to run in the capital city.

First, we are going to find a blacksmith.

There is supposed to be a skilled Dwarf blacksmith inside the capital city. Since it took a long time to make a sword, I decided to drop by to have a look first.

Both Sati and Lilia accompanied me. Ann is together with Tilika, while Ellie has her own errand to run. The two of them are going to visit the shrine and the Truth Official office. Will is taking the role of an escort and doing miscellaneous jobs.

“If something happens, make sure to protect your own self, understood?”

“Leave it to me!”

No offence but my wives are 100 times stronger than him, however by having a man presence itself, the chance something will happen is lowered. He is doing a safe job while getting a pocket money, a win-win.

Alright, so this is the dwarf blacksmith.

The shop name is Gualam Smiting Workshop. Once I’ve heard about the details, I managed to find the shop almost immediately.

It is a small workshop and the shop part is almost non-existent since the weapons were lined up casually and there is no sign of ongoing business. The shop only accepts pre-order. We were introduced to this shop by Olba san. He said this place makes a cheaper magic compatible sword compared to the general manufactured one in another store.

There is no customer inside the shop despite the large crowd currently in the Kingdom capital. Perhaps this shop only needs the regular customers or someone with referral to survive without selling anything to the general populace.

Dwarves are the closest demi human race to a human being. They are somewhat shorter than a human being with a wide body and super

strength. More or less.

If they shaved their distinctive beard and mixed with people normally, people will hardly notice even in this town.

But this shop's blacksmith has a typical dwarf figure. He gives off a stubborn air with a fine beard. His bulging muscle is apparent.

"Huh, so you were introduced by Olba. Is he doing well?"

"He retired from being an adventurer after his foot was injured. Right now, he has returned back to his hometown and is currently governing over a small village. He is acting as the village head."

Afterward, I straight away go to the heart of the matter. I told him that I want a magic sword.

"Hmm. Then, let me see you swing the sword at your back."

He wants to see my ability. I swing my swords several times just like he wanted.

"You have Olba referral. I see, that is an elf sword. Show me.....yes. It has a fine line, but a good sword nonetheless."

I initially thought that the dwarf and the elf have a bad relationship with each other, but that doesn't seem to be the case in this world. In fact, the dwarf engineers were assisting to build defence equipment for the Elf Country.

After that, he handed me a silver mithril dagger.

"Try pouring your mana in. Give it your all."

"Give it my all.....?"

"Ou. Give it your all so that I can measure your capacity."

Hmm. I never used my full mana for my magic sword, so I wonder what will happen?

For now, I will gradually fill this dagger with my mana and feel how

it goes. If things turn bad, I will stop.

I am pouring my mana inside the dagger. Slowly.

The dagger is now engulfed with flame. I gradually increase the heat.

Though, I made a mistake. I shouldn't go with fire. It's hot.

But I will endure and pour more mana.

"H, hey, didn't you pour everything out yet?"

I'd say about 10 percent now. But the heat is getting worse. Seriously hot.

"Stop! That much is fine."

I stop the flow of my mana and deactivate the magic sword spell.

"Hooooottt."

I put the flaming red hot dagger on the floor in hurry and quickly check my palm.

Did I burn myself a little? 【Heal】

"This is....."

Mr. Gualam pick up the piping hot dagger fearfully and check it up.

"The silver mithril cannot bear the load. Besides, the handle was made by the same material.....was that your best just now?"

"Ah, I'd say it isn't even my half."

Although it is still less than 10 percent, the amount of mana used is enough to cast Meteor.

"Hmm. I don't think it can handle it. Look."

The silver mithril dagger bend a little and the tip has rounded. Did it melt?

“The silver mithril cannot withstand your mana. I see you have good swordsmanship and strength too. In order to withstand both your strength and your mana, we will require the highest grade of orichalcum. I also need to prepare a special made hilt.”

“It’s okay if you make me your usual magic compatible sword.”

“No good!”

“That, somehow.”

“I will never hand you a sword that will break upon using.”

“Oh my, I heard you are skilled.”

Good grief.

“Don’t listen to that damn elf cheeky mouth! My specialty is just different. There is a special manufacturing process for unique metal. As for myself, I can only handle the silver mithril.”

“That’s why, I’m telling you to give up. We are a bunch of busy——”

But if I put a lot of mana, I will feel that sensation. I wonder how it will feel like with wind.

I leave the dwarf and the elf to argue with themselves. I picked up the silver mithril dagger which was placed on the desk and try pouring my mana in.

Hmm. Even after I poured additional wind mana inside, I don’t feel much changes. Just a little more——

“Ah.”

When the mana begun to sip into the crack, the dagger let out an uncomfortable clacking metallic sound and it break apart after I left it alone.

The elf and the dwarf stopped their quarrelling, right now they are watching over here with disbelief.

“No good, the sword basically snapped into half.”

“That, you need to pay for it.”

Go figure.

In the end, he decided to introduce me to another dwarf who specializes in magic metal.

Provided that, I am willing to go to the Empire. For the time being, I'm left with no choice but to settle down with a normal sword.

“At least, my skills allow me to temper any average type of sword and although there is nothing special, it will at least come out decent. Well, if you wish to have a normal sword, you are welcome to come here anytime. I will temper you any kind of sword you want.”

On the other hand, there is no other blacksmith in this Kingdom Capital who can handle magic metal. Processing of magic metal is one of the arcane of the Dwarf.

I will certainly find another sword for sell if I search throughout the capital, however they will be nothing more than the mithril dagger that I broke earlier. Truth to be told, I am satisfied if it is barely usable. Right now, any normal sword that I used will be crushed at once. I don't need to force myself to find one and buy it.

“I want to introduce you to the dwarven village, but.....right now they most likely have move out, well, you will understand once you go.”

“What do you mean?”

“It is meaningless to stay at a place where there are no ores to be collected. After the mines are emptied, people will look for new place and move on.”

Since the last time he returned was more than 30 years ago, it is not surprising if the village has already moved. If that is the case, he wishes us good luck to find it.

“Well, since they are not hiding their village from other human, you

can just ask people who are living nearby.”

Is he aiming to get a lot of money from this information and referral?

At first, I told everyone that I am going to use my own pocket money to pay, but I think Ellie has managed to cut our expenses, therefore I wonder if I can ask for party's fund to cover this?

Chapter 6 ~ To the Gladiator Competition

“Alright. Now, what do you think we regroup and look for Sergeant dono?”

“Yes. Masaru sama.”

“It was awful that we visited there for nothing.”

I won’t go as far as saying it is a waste, but the money spent on the broken silver mithril really is. I’d say the price is reasonable, but they still hurt. Why are they so expensive?

Since the metal was broken due to magic, his policy won’t allow him to reuse them to make new equipment. So strict.

“Excavating rare material from earth is an immensely difficult task, you know.”

“You excavate them?”

“Then let’s excavate them ourselves.”

“Do we hire manpower? Or do you plan to use magic?”

“Either way is fine. Isn’t it easier if Masaru can start excavating by using your magic?”

“Can we find the ores with Earth Sonar?”

In case we managed to dig out some silver Mithril, do you think it’s possible to turn it into a big profit? Hmm—although, if it can be so easily done, I’m sure other Earth Mage would have done that long time ago. Besides, I think starting a mine takes as much effort and free time as making a village. I wonder how many parts can actually be done with magic?

Regarding this matter, even Lilia is not aware of the details. I guess the person who is familiar with Earth magic is that one elf chief I worked with. I will ask for their advice next time I went back to the village.

“A mine is.....a dangerous place.”

Sati who was listening silently at our back suddenly muttered it strongly. The unsold slaves are threatened to be sent off to the mine to die.

“You are right. It is wiser if we can avoid the danger. Let’s leave it up to the expert and buy the things that we need.”

“Yes. Me too, I will do my best to obtain it!”

Sati is a lovely girl. If this world is not heading to its end, I’m sure she will lead a good and satisfying life.

Our next task is to visit the capital’s Adventurer Guild.

They are a tad larger compared to the one at Siory town. The adjoining Commercial Guild is the same case, too.

Just like in Miyaga, this is a big town with a strong military presence, hence there are less adventurers around to take on the request.

However, as expected, during this festive season, this place is currently filled with adventurers. I’m struggling my way, pushing through the crowds to the receptionist desk and after an inquiry, I immediately found Sergeant dono location. I was told that he is teaching at the training ground.

“Sergeant dono!”

“Ooh, isn’t that Masaru. For you to be at the Kingdom’s capital during this season, don’t tell me you are actually interested to join the gladiator competition?”

He was in the middle of teaching, but after I called him, he stopped and come here right away.

“Eh, well. I told you before, doing that kind of thing is a bit too much for me. How about I let Sati enter in my place?”

“Is that okay?”

“Just give it a try. You can be the representative of our party.”

“Yes!”

“What a waste. I have a feeling you can go far in this competition.”

“Well, if we are just talking about swordsmanship, I wasn’t able to beat Sati for sometimes now. By the way, why is Sergeant dono here at the Kingdom’s capital?”

“Every year, I came here to coach the contestants.”

I see. Even in this guild there is no person that is as skilled as Sergeant dono. I mean, when Sergeant dono come forth, I get the feeling that everyone is in rush trying to finish their task, so I might be correct.

“I’m on my way to the Empire, so I thought I can stop by here to enjoy the festival. I will be staying here during the festival period. I’m currently staying at——”

We move to one corner at the training ground to avoid someone overhear our conversation, then I introduced Lilia, and afterward I managed to explain the situation briefly.

“I have no doubt that you are going to gain an astounding feat someday, but this.....”

The information was handed to him after I got promoted to A rank, but he never thought that I’m going to become a lord anytime soon, and it is truly unexpected that I am wed to an elven princess.

Since Sergeant dono is busy, I will only trouble him this much for today.

I promise him that I will come again, and I was told about the lodging he is currently staying in.

Next, I decided to go to the gladiator competition reception desk.

The gladiator competition will be held at the stadium, and the qualifying round will start during the third day of the festival for two days. The competitor will rest for a day in between, and they will proceed to main battle for another two days. The stadium is an enormous circular building made of stone, the same as the one you can find on planet Earth.

“Masaru sama, it seems that an A rank is exempted from the qualifying round.”

Sati reported the main points after she gives her all to read the rules and application guidelines for the gladiator competition stuck on the competition signboard. But I don't think that applies to an A rank mage, but I'd say myself as more of a mage. It's not there. Impossible.

It is a given that magic is prohibited in a gladiator competition. However, healing technique for oneself is still allowed.

As long it has blade, you can use it as a weapon, be it spear, bow or buckler. Body armour is required to be made of leather. Only the helmet can be made of metal. Basic supplies can be used, but you must bring your own.

Winning or losing is determine either if the contestant faints, give up, or sustain enough injuries deemed by the referee.

There were other fine regulations, but the rules are roughly like that.

An organized group of well-trained healers are always on standby during this competition, but sometimes people still ended up dying. There is even a warning about upcoming bloody battle. Yikes, so scary!

“Sati, are you really going to enter? It sounds dangerous.”

“I want to enter.”

“Then it's fine.”

“Is there no requirement to enter this competition? Then, I’m entering, too.”

“You can’t, Lilia. At the very least, you should wait until you are able to handle shira decently. And not to mention, magic usage is strictly prohibited.”

Once she is in a pinch, her spirit defence will be automatically invoked and that will lead her to her defeat. Even during her training, that happened.

The only combat skill that Lilia possessed right now is Shield level 1. She is going to gain Swordsmanship level 1 on her own through her training. Her training is moving along considerably, however the elves live a long life; therefore, a period of two months is seen as short by them.

“Muu～. Even though it looks so interesting.”

Perhaps she heard about it or maybe she found it fun because there is sword in them. She might be a little bit muscle-brain.

“Well, let us cheer for Sati.”

Sati filled in the necessary information on the participant registration at the reception desk.

She can write things easily now and not only her name. She has grown.

“So, you are a B rank adventurer from the Adventurer Guild at Siory town. Next is appeal point from your career history.”

“Career.....appeal.....?”

“Let see, this is Sati’s first debut in this competition. Appeal point is meant to show her strong forte, that said, she is an all-rounder, good with sword and bow.”

“Her first appearance, and she is an all-rounder, good with swords and bows. Thank you very much. The qualifying pairing will be pinned on the billboard nearby the entrance gate in the morning of

the competition day. Please confirm it yourself. Besides that, there are betting tickets available to buy to anticipate the winner of each match. If you do not mind, please feel free to buy it.”

“Is it fine to buy for myself?”

“Of course. If you have the confidence, I’d say go for it.”

Ha! If I bet on Sati, then I might be able to make tidy profit.

The betting ticket is prediction based on the breakthrough during qualifying round. In the main battle, they are determined by winner of the match. There seem to be several other types of predictions for the winners. Though, I will bet everything on Sati.

“Sati, aim for the first place.”

“Yes, please leave it to me!”

What a reliable way to gain pocket money!

Just like this, the matter with gladiator competition is finished. What left is to find Crook and Silva.

I only know the name of the establishment where they are staying and its rough location, so I asked the food stall owner where I bought my food and while listening to him, I was greeted by a boy whose face is unfamiliar.

“Hey mister, are you looking for someone?”

“Yeah. Do you know a lodging name Amatsubame no Tsubasa?”

“I know! This way.”

For a moment, I got a feeling that we are being led to a strange place and that is bad, however there is hardly anyone who can win against me right now, and we have Sati here. It’s hard to get used to being stronger.

Following the kid guide’s, we walked for a while and soon we find the inn.

Here it is, thus the kid holds out his hand. He is asking for the guide fare, huh.

For the time being, I give him one piece of copper coin, then he said, "Thank you!" and left us. Initially I thought he will demand much more, but he is actually fine with a 100 Yen worth of coin. As usual, child labour is always cheap.

I made an inquiry at the inn about Crook and Silva whereabouts. I learn where their room is, then I tap their door.

"Hey, this is me, Masaru."

Crook came out right away.

"Masaru! It's been long time since we last see you!"

Honestly, it feels like forever too since the last time I've seen their faces.

"Sati chan too. Let see, this girl is"

"I will introduce her to you shortly."

I grin.

I entered their two-bed small bedroom and sit on their beds.

"This is Masaru we are talking about. No matter what you say, I will not be surprised."

Yeah, yeah, Silva nodded his head in assent.

"I bet that girl is your new wife, am I right?"

"Hou, truly what I expected from Masaru only friends."

Lilia swiftly removes her hood.

"Elf!?"

"I am the first princess of the elven royal family, Liliane Dora Pettycoat Yamano."

“Princess!?”

“Just like what Crook said, she is my new wife.”

“You serious!?”

“I’ve reached A rank, too.”

“No kidding!?”

“Then, I became a lord of a small village. After a few years, I will become a noble.”

“Noble!?”

Crook mouth was left open wide from astonishment.

“Congratulations on your marriage.”

Silva lightly congratulates us.

“Thanks, Silva.”

“Just how……. what happened?”

“Briefly speaking, I went for a winter vacation, then the Elf Country got attacked by monsters. Then, I lend them my help.”

Just like that, I repeated back the same explanation. However, since they got surprised each time I get to the good part, I find it more fun to talk with them.

“If that is the case, we can’t continue speaking to you casually anymore, huh…….”

“Hey man, come on, stop it. Even if I become A rank, even if I become a lord and a noble, even if I have five wives and maids in a mansion, our friendship will last forever, isn’t that so?”

“Fuck you! Back then, I really should have gotten rid of you!”

“Hahaha, I will serve as your opponent anytime you want. Although I’m three times stronger compared to back then.”

“Three times stronger.....hey, don’t tell me you are entering the gladiator competition?”

“No, it’s not me who is going out. Sati is entering, though.”

“Sati chan is strong, too.”

“If you bet on Sati, you could make a tidy profit.”

“Ooh!?”

“Sati chan, do you think you can win the first prize?”

That is to be expected. Until now, I have never seen any swordsman better than Sati except for Sergeant dono. But when it comes to big event like this.....

“I think I can do it, but.....since Sergeant dono is also here, I don’t know the level of other participants in this competition.”

“Lazard san is entering too, you know.”

Unfortunately, Lazard san no longer can win against Sati.

Hmm.....no.....how should I say it? He never confronts Sati directly head up. He didn’t fight me seriously before, even then he managed to measure my ability accurately. Even though he is C rank, he has experiences taking down dragon before. He already has the ability, so if he has more achievements, I’m sure he will be promoted to B rank easily.

“This tournament, if she can win then it’s a serious chance for me to make good money.”

You want to use it for your life after retirement with Liz san, huh.

This is worrisome. I should have been stronger by now, but I don’t feel like I can win at all.

“You guys are not participating?”

“No way, not a chance. I surely going lose my first qualifying match.

Since you can get good prize money just by qualifying, the level of contestants is very high.”

Grr. Now I’m worried if Sati can win at all.

Especially now when my pocket money is depending entirely on Sati.

“Alright, Sati. We are going to practice until the day of the tournament.”

Three more days to go until the tournament start. I will train her thoroughly. She is going to fight in preliminary round while retaining her fatigue from her special training. If she cannot win the preliminary round with the degree of fatigue from the special training, she cannot fight in main battle anyway.

I will train Sati as much as possible during these three days. We can enjoy the festival to our heart contents after the tournament end.

“Yes, I will do my best!”

“With that said, we are leaving. We are staying at the elf mansion located in the noble district during this festival period, so please come and visit us anytime.”

To enter the noble district, first we need to notify the name of our visitor at the entrance, and afterwards they can show something that can identify them, like the Guild Card, and they will be permitted to enter.

“Umu. You guys are welcome since you are Masaru friends.”

“The elf mansion in noble district! We will gladly take up your offer!”

I stop by the guild again on the way back and asked Sergeant dono. He said not for long, maybe around 1 or 2 hours as her sparring partner but that much is enough experience for Sati. Next, she will take on a group.

Should I ask some help from the elves? There is still some elf swordsman that I have not meet yet, so it would be the best if there are several Titus class swordsmen among them.

I'll use the golem too. I will let them wear equipment, thus, the golem fighter. Its movement is dull, but it has high defence, and I don't mind it if they were destroyed.

When I asked for his favour to train Sati during my visit at the guild, he immediately said that he will take the responsibility.

"Sati has the capability as one of the winning candidates, however her experience in one on one combat is lacking. I will teach her some technique that will be useful for one on one combat tomorrow."

Lazard san actual merit lies on his tactical prowess, and compared to mine, he is 5 level above. I predicted Sati ability to be higher than him, but her lack of experience in one on one combat will hinder herself from winning easily.

Well, I'm not the one that is fighting, so there is no need to bother. Let's wish Sati the best.

Once we get inside our room at the elf mansion, I found everyone is already there. First, I reported our participation in the gladiator competition.

"With that said, we are going to train until the day of qualifying start."

"Let's aim for the overall victory!"

"This tournament has a pretty high standard. But I think Sati might be able to win."

"I wonder if Olba san has ever participate in this tournament?"

"This happen long time before we met. That time, I heard he lost in the first round of the main battle. After that, he specialized in monster hunting and aimed to be an A rank, and during that time he is no longer interested with the tournament."

So even during his youth, Olba san lost his first fight.

"Oh yes. I met Leuven. If you are looking for a special lesson, why

don't we ask Leuven?"

He was in the same party with Ellie, a shield user for Dawn Battle Axe. Right now, he is studying the best he can to be a mage at the magic school in the Kingdom's capital.

"Isn't the magic school class starting soon?"

"I will offer myself to be Leuven magic instructor if he is willing to accept our request. Maybe he can take a day off."

Good, good, it feels like we are on the right track. Even Sergeant dono is supposed to come here tomorrow morning to help her practice.

What should we do on the afternoon? The garden here can be used as a training space, but it is quite small. The ground in our mansion is bigger, and the elves are coming from that side, too.

Should I give Will some pocket money and drive him away?

"Will, from what I've seen, you have done an excellent job in your escort duty today. So even though it is a little, I'm giving you a reward. As you are aware, we are going to be busy with special training from this moment, so why don't you hook up with your friends in the meantime? You can bring the money to make up with your friends. When you are fighting with your partner, you need to reconcile."

"I want to assist you in your special training too, big bro!"

"Ah, but that is....."

"You see, I was not able to be of much help to you today. If I can watch the instructor closely then it is enough for my training."

Should I let him do that today? Or else, should I tell him about the Gate, since he is no longer a nuisance? Otherwise, it is impossible for us to make round trips while keeping it a secret, unless I kick this guy out.

My Gate is probably not as big a secret, compared to his real identity

as the prince of the Empire.

“Will, I’m going to have an important talk, so can you please step outside for a while?”

“Ah, sure.”

Once I make sure that Will has gone to the hallway, I begin my discussion.

“I think we have to tell him about the existence of the Gate.”

“Guess so. It will be hard for us to use it all the times otherwise.”

Ann agrees immediately, while Ellie let out what in her mind.

“If Masaru is fine with that, I have no objection. Now that the elves have our back, even if it gets exposed, it won’t be significant.”

My original plan is to announce it once I became an A rank, but the problem is when an individual can use the Gate. If any nation starts offering us the position as a transfer mage, we might have difficulty to enter new place. But if I said that we are working with the Elf, even if the Empire or the guild are aware of the Gate, they would not pursue the matter anymore.

“Will is going to be fine. He is genuinely attached to you right now.”

“He is honest and trustworthy.”

Lilia and Tilika has no objection to raise, so I’m calling Will inside.

“Absolutely never tell anyone about what I am going to tell you from now on, understood?”

“Sure, big bro, if you ask me to never leak it, then I will do just that. So, what is it?”

“I’ve decided to return back to the village right now.”

“Huh? But big bro, your village is far away, isn’t it? So, no matter how fast Lilia neesan flying speed is, you—”

“It will only take a moment. Since I can use the Gate.”

“You serious.”

“Do you know how dreadful things will be if this was known to public?”

“I’d say, super bad.”

“You said ‘super’, but would it be that bad?”

“Big bro, you are a free adventurer.....but what about the elf?”

“I’m not being hired; we are just cooperating.”

“You should still keep it a secret. You will land into trouble, yo.”

“But Ellie said it would be okay as long I have reached A rank.....”

“The Adventurer Guild will protect you. Does your guild do this?”

“No idea.”

“Even if you don’t know, I think they will protect you, but they might want to use you too as well.”

The latter is most likely the case. The Gate is convenient, after all.

“Long time ago, there were practices where they branded the transfer user with slave crest. So, if they got used by the enemy, they were assassinated.”

“Seriously.”

“Well, right now the international relationship has stabilized, so it won’t be like back then, still.....”

This is more dangerous than I thought!

“But I mean, this is not something foreign to a prince of the Empire, right?”

“If a gate user can be acquired in exchange to my life, my

grandfather will never hesitate to do it.”

“Are you serious.”

“Not only that, there is no way he can manage the big Empire.”

“I can use the Gate too. Don’t tell anyone, okay?”

“Both of you!?”

“We are a group of talented people. The destiny has guided us and gathered us together.”

“Wha, so it was fated?”

That is a bad response. As expected, if it is my destiny to be with this guy, I will like it more if he is a girl.

“Me and everyone else think you are the same like us.”

“Me too!?”

“Masaru, the owner of special power, an elven princess and the prince of the Empire happens to meet. Do you really think this is a mere coincidental?”

“Well, that is.”

“When I was born, with the blessing of the spirits, I was given a prophecy where I’m going to do something big in the future. With our power, it is not impossible to save the world.”

I’m glad, seems like she is unaware of the prophecy of what will happen after 20 years. She is just bluffing. She is simply following the flow of the story.....

“Me too.....?”

“That’s correct. We were all handpicked by Masaru. That included you.”

This Lilia. Is she that desperate to raise his loyalty? Though, this might be the best timing for that.

His eyes met with Lilia and they stayed locked like that.

“Do you understand, Will?”

“I, at that time when big bro saved me, big bro, he truly looks like a God. So, I thought something will definitely change if I follow big bro around. Exactly, I changed after attending the beginner training course.”

“That much is only the beginning. Believe in Masaru.”

“I believe in him. Even Sergeant dono said the same thing. That big bro and Sati san are special.”

“I used to be a beastmen with no redeeming merit. But after I was found by Masaru sama, I was awakened to my talent.”

“Even your magic?”

“My magic and my sword, they were all power given to me by Masaru sama.”

“Me.....me too, can I use magic?”

“Believe in Masaru from the bottom of your heart. And your wish, will come true.”

Still, how should I say this. It feels like a meeting for cultists.

“I will believe! But my magic is.....”

“Will.”

“Yes, big bro.”

I stand up and stand in front of Will.

“Power, do you wish for Mana?”

“I want.....”

The most important part is his current state of mind.

“You see I, can only give power to those who believe me from the bottom of their heart. That is how I give magic to Sati, who is a beastsmen.”

Start casting 【Light of miracle】 ——

The room is filled with light from my mana. For those who witness it for the first time, the light must appear to be mysterious.

“This is.....”

“Believe in me from the bottom of your heart. If you can believe me, the power will be yours.”

“I believe it deep inside me. And that is how I gained my power.”

“I believe in Masaru sama power too, and that’s how I got my magic.”

“Me too. Gate, and my utmost wish, Space Magic.”

“I got a great power too. Enough to change this world.”

Hey Tilika, what do you mean by that.

“Me too, Masaru has given me power enough to rival the great priest. This is the God divine protection. We are receiving God graces through Masaru.”

“God.....graces?”

“So, Will, what do you want? What will you do?”

A quiet and gentle question was asked from a beautiful elf illuminated by the light.

“I, I, I believe in big bro!”

“Will you sacrifice your life for Masaru’s sake? All of us here are prepared that much, you know?”

“Me too! I will gladly sacrifice my life for big bro’s sake!”

“Well said, Will!”

I increase the mana output further. The room is filled completely with light with me at the centre.

I can hear the menu popping already. Are you serious?



“In that case, let the power flow through you.”

【Light of miracle】 activated, then the light burst.

I operate his menu and choose general magic and mana sensing.

“Aa.....a, aaaaaaaaaaaaaahhh!? Feel it, I can feel it!”

“Correct. That is your mana. Right now, you are capable of controlling magic.”

“A, aah.....big broo.....”

“Try it. You should be able to use light up magic by now.”

“O, okay.”

Will activated his 【Light】

“I-it’s true.....my own magic.....uuh *sob*.....”

“Yeah. Good for you, Will.”

Looking at him weeping overcomes with his emotion, I lightly tap his shoulder.

“I thought he needed another last push.”

Lilia murmur in a small voice that cannot be heard by Will.

Don’t tell me, she sees Will as someone who is easy to coax over, and that just now has confirmed it.....

Chapter 7 ~ Sati's Intensive Training ①

“But still, big bro, what is this.....?”

After being in a daze from looking at the light that he outputted himself, his mind finally returns back to earth.

“I thought it is good to teach you the general magic first.”

Without any prior notice on what is going to happen, he was suddenly capable of using magic. Of course, he couldn't understand what is currently happening.

“Have you heard about apostle?”

“Someone that God has sent to.....wai-!”

“Masaru is that apostle, personally sent here by the chief God, Itōusura sama Himself.”

Ann proudly declares.

Previously, I asked Ann for a help to identify the content inside the diary. The answer arrived, and when Ann realized that it is truly the chief God that responded, she burst into excitement. Her loyalty towards me also increased a little.

“So, he wasn't a Majimon.....ah, a hero perhaps? A hero like the one who save our world a while back.”

Hero. That is the standard conclusion. As expected, taking down the Demon King and saving the world in the process bring an extreme fame to your name.

“I'm just an apostle. I'm no hero. Right now, the Demon King didn't exist in this world, hence there is no world crisis. That's why currently, there is no hero.”

“But, didn’t you possess the power to save the world?”

“Wonder what they actually are.”

I have no intention to admit it.

“Big bro, dang awesome!”

“Right now, a fragment of that power has been given to you.”

“Ah, so this is.....the God’s grace.”

“I will explain things to you in order.”

I like to start Sati special training as soon as I can, but I need to properly conclude things with this guy first.

I hope he will act as one of our forces, but right now he is tied to another party and the current circumstances surrounding us right now is messy. He was coaxed to this side by Lilia, but what now?

“The God bless me with divine protection and brought me to this land. I was born in a faraway land, so far that none are aware of it including people of the Empire.”

“Ah, is that so.”

“Correct. In short, the divine protection is a power that will bestow you the power that you wish for. Of course, there is strict condition that we need to follow. As I said earlier, it is ineffective if you have no trust in me. Plus, it isn’t easier for me to increase the amount of people with divine protection too.”

But I still managed to get 6 of them in the span of half a year. The pace isn’t as bad as I thought?

“That.....if it’s not for heroic deeds, then what is this power for?”

“God said that it was a test. I’m required to actively using it and report on how I feel about it. Occasionally, I will receive an oracle that dictates to an immediate job.”

“And it is an undisputed fact that the Elf Country was saved thanks to that oracle.”

“Well, right now I have received no oracle, so I have nothing that will require immediate attention. Basically, I’m free to do whatever I want to.”

“Does that mean you are going to receive another oracle in the future?”

“Perhaps.”

Most probably will.

“And at that time, me too.....”

“Not only that.....the divine protection that you have received is not limited to that much only. They will get stronger once you start training. Right now, you only know a little bit of magic, but that doesn’t mean you will not grow stronger. Currently, you don’t need to worry yourself about divine protection too much. Just do whatever you feel like doing.”

“When the time comes, please depend on me!”

“Just that.....I was in near death situation six times over the last six months. Really dangerous.”

About half of it was due to my carelessness and my own lack of power, but it doesn’t change the fact of how dangerous it is, and there is possibility that it is going to be more dangerous in the future.

“Six times in six months.....”

“Hey, since you already know some magic, can’t you return back to your family house proudly now? I can even increase the type of magic that you can use. For all that we are concerned with, we don’t want to bring him to some danger, see? Plus, you said you want to help me, but what about your party?”

“Ah—you ain’t wrong.”

“I will tell you more details once I’m free. In the meantime, go practice with the magic that you already know.”

“Yes, big bro.”

“I think you are already aware, but if this is known outside, things will get rough. It cannot be helped if the knowledge regarding the Gates’ are exposed, but you need to protect the secret of my divine protection with your life. You can tell others that I am the one who taught you magic but my teaching method, keep it in absolute secrecy.”

“Got it.”

“Right now, Sati’s special training takes the upmost priority. Lilia, can you help me call for captain?”

First, we are going to tell them about our participation in the gladiator competition and asked for their cooperation. Afterwards, I’m going back to the village, then to the Elf Country and again back to the village.....this is going to be a busy day.

The elf who resides in the Kingdom’s capital is borrowing us three of their master swordsmen. Then, their country will send an expert to us and the person are coming tomorrow.

Me. Titus and Patos. Ann, Lilia, Shira and Will. Olba san and Nania san. Then, my battle Golem. The elf security guards in our village also has someone who is proficient with close range combat, so we asked them to participate.

Since I’m going to use Golem, I decided to create a wider ground along the outer wall of our mansion in the village.

We are fully equipped with wooden swords and armours. Sati has decided to use a wooden sword and the first leather armour that she received during her fight in the tournament. Olba san gave me a look, but this much is not a violation to the rule.

I will change it once it takes a beating from the series of the matches. Besides for me and the Golem, I still have multiple of them.

Considering the use of steel sword is allowed according to the rule, the damage taken by the armour will be great. Even though recovery magic is allowed, the core stamina will still reduce after taking a beating, therefore fighting for a long time is an extremely hard thing to do. So, I planned to have this mock battle with wooden sword to make her familiarised with the beating from one to one combat.

“I will go first.”

I take up my sword and shield. I will maintain the air of seriousness. This is unlike the usual practice session with Sati, hence the difference in seriousness. Perhaps it comes from her preparation.

In order not to get hurt, she is practicing avoiding the injury. It takes one to be serious to win. The preparedness to kill. With a mindset ready to die, one can muster their most desperate efforts.

This time, I’m going to win against Sati. I’ve never taken any fight seriously before, except when I’m fighting against Sergeant dono or the monsters.

Sati cowers a little after sensing my murder intent. I felt a little heartbroken to see my cute Sati who always serve others like this, but at Sati level, this will not turn into a good exercise unless I take things seriously.

“I’m coming.”

I stepped my foot in front and drive forward with my full might. I don’t need any trick. She is already acquainted with my wittiness and all the tricks up my sleeve.

Dodge. That is an assumption. The sword horizontally sweeps her down her feet. Receive. Pushing it as it is and escaping. Pursuit. Pursuit. As expected, I can’t take it easy. Her counterattack is coming.

It lasts for a while.

“Sati, please take this fight more seriously. I’m wearing the armour, so I’m going to be good.”

“Yes. But.....Masaru sama is strong.”

A strange sense of embarrassment flows in my head. Sati hasn't seen my special training with Sergeant dono yet.

"An opponent of my level will easily come out inside this gladiator competition. All of them are dead serious to take down Sati. It's not good enough if you cannot take down a person like me."

"Yes,"

Then comes the second round. This time, it's my turn to strike. First blow, second blow. Sati's counterattack. But it is just a wooden sword. They don't cause serious blow. The place where I received them will sustain a little damage.

I intercept Sati's blow at the last moment and aim for the gap in her attack. Dodged. Too agile.

Sati counterattack. I receive her sword with my shield. I ward off her sword. Once again, her sword pushes it ways towards me. I receive it again.

Once I attempted to create a distance, I was pursued. Clang, clang, clang. I turned into defensive stances. The moment I was pushed into unfavourable position, it becomes harder for me to counterattack. However, this is not that desperate of situation compared to that time with Sergeant dono. If I focus entirely in defending, I will get my turn soon. Sati looks like she is going to stop attacking soon, too.

I released a strong blow to hit Sati's torso. Both of our swords got repelled. I close the distance between us and unleashed Shield Bash. I knock my shield to all over her body. Sati whose response was delayed received the entire blows head front—clang, she staggers.

Now, it is Sati's turn to attack. My leg is feeling the attack now, and the feeling course through my thigh lightly.

"Fuh, change. Next please."

Sati is really strong. Shield technique, Evasion, Mind Eye, and her defence are considerably powerful, but the attack coordination might be weaker. This is her first harsh training in a while. I will consider that in mind.

Everyone agrees to my idea. The injured person will get a treatment, then the next one come out.

Next, I'm using a three-meter battle Golem type. Only during this time Sati will switch to using an iron sword.

"It is just a Golem. There is no need to refrain yourself."

"Yes!"

A Golem pack a strong power, but its movement is slow. It is swinging a big sword matching its own body, yet it still fails to hit Sati even once.

The sword and the shield its use is made of Earth, but they were strengthened, hence they still keep their original appearance. The Golem however, it is being shaved by Sati bit by bit. How very fragile.

Other than the sword, it failed to master the shield too. I never think about how to move the Golem efficiently.....ah, it's done.

Finally, the damages exceed the limit and the Golem crumbles down, returning back to earth.

"Do you want to go for the second round?"

The sun is going to set soon, and I need to put on the light. I think one more set of matches is still fine. At night, I have night activities that I need to attend to.

"Let's go, Sati!"

I put an extra effort during the second run, but in the end, I only last a little bit longer than the first run.

Our large dining hall is filled by all the participants in our training, and once our meal finished, we moved to the mansion's living room for recovery magic training. The use of Recovery Magic is allowed during the tournament. I will use whatever I have in hand.

Even I can master it in two days. I'm sure that Sati can, too.

“Concentrate, and then imagine.”

The instructor is obviously Angela sensei. The method is roughly the same during my training. She is required to treat the little wound on her fingers by herself.

Sati has a high amount of mana, so the degree of difficulty shouldn't be higher than mine during my training, but yeah, her mana totally dried up. Well, this is her first day.

Two more days before the qualifying. Five more days before the main battle. She will make do somehow.

“I'm going to talk to Will for a while.”

I'm going to continue the talk we had earlier today. I still need to explain to him regarding the points systems, then about how I still need to consult on him regarding the direction of his development and his future plan.

When I visited Will place at the second floor, I found him sleeping on the floor.

“And here I planned to talk about it.”

He fainted due to insufficient mana. I already warned him, and since he hails from a family of magicians, it's expected that he is well versed with magic craft. However, there is no way to know the limit unless he tests it himself.

He can probably wake up if I charge him up with mana, but instead I brought him to bed and let him sleep. We will continue talking tomorrow. Even I'm beat from moving around all day today.

I return to the living room, wished Sati good luck and went to my room.

I sit on the desk and start writing in my diary. I write a lot today.

While I am still writing, Ellie arrived in my room. I'm instantly fired

up after looking at her figure wearing a negligee, but I'll hold off just for a tiny bit while.

"Are you writing about today?"

She hugs me from behind, stick her face to mine and peeks into my diary.

"Yea."

I answered her without stopping my hand from writing.

"Today went very well. I didn't think we could get this much success."

"I was also surprised."

"I was glad things goes to the right direction especially after that speech."

"Is that so? I simply follow through after Lilia. Lilia is truly a genuine elf royal family member. She retains that mysterious ambience around her."

"This says Will, right."

I'm writing in Japanese, but she suddenly uttered that name while pointing at my diary.

"Um, I hope you will stop deciphering Japanese, please....."

"Japanese language has many types of letters and all I know is how to read names, nothing else. But still, I will stop it if Masaru doesn't like it."

Ellie has a smart mind, so I'm not surprise if she manages to decipher Japanese as soon she gets serious. What I'm writing in the diary is the events that happened during the day, so there isn't much hint to use for decoding.

"But I wish Masaru will teach me without being stingy about it, you know?"

“This is pretty much my personal diary. I’m embarrassed.”

“We are already in a relationship where we already stop being shy about this, right?”

“Huh, is that really so? Should I stop being shy about what I want?”

“What are you talking about suddenly now.”

“Then, let’s give it a shot!”

“Yeah, let’s do it.”

There are still things that I want to try that I’ve never done yet! I was restraining myself a little, but since it is a request, I will gladly dig in.

“Um, as expected, I am still too shy for it.....”

“Relax, relax. Let’s just see it through till the end.”

“Ah, wa, wait a—!”

Actually, I’m not feeling embarrassed at all! This is so much fun!

After finishing two rounds with Ellie, on the way to the bath, I met with Ann and Sati who are going back to their room. They really were giving their all till late night.

“Ellie is already asleep?”

She already lies down the futon and she is not replying anymore. I wonder if she got too tired from our strange play today.

I’m telling her that I’m going to Sati’s place, then I leave the room.

I lightly tap the door at Sati’s room which is just directly opposite. Then, I heard she is coming to the door.

“Good work, Sati. How is your Recovery Magic training?”

“I still cannot make it work yet.....”

“Well, this is still your first day. Some people still cannot do it even after a month. Even if you cannot learn it right now, it will still be useful in the future.”

“Yes.”

She looks genuinely tired during our conversation, so I asked her to lay on her bed and then massage her, telling her to give her best tomorrow too. Nothing lewd, just a normal massage with her clothes on. It might look like a petty imitation from a masseur viewpoint but seems like she is feeling comfortable.

“You are strong, Sati.”

I wonder where such power is hidden inside this small body. Her muscles are firm and solid now, despite looking famished and about to die when I first met her. She is still thin like usual, though. Her status has risen to considerable extent, but physically it doesn't look like her body has changed according to the rise of her numerical strength, so there is no way to know.

“Nn, Masaru sama is strong, too.”

No, no. I lost to you three times today.

“Um, sometimes, Masaru sama is strong and sometimes Masaru sama is less strong, but when Masaru sama is strong, you are really strong.”

So, what she means is that my strength is fluctuating. I give my best today, though. I wonder if it is impossible to show my true strength when there is thing to compromise.

“That's why you are strong, if you with your sword is equivalent to me, when you add magic, I'm no longer your match.”

As usual, both of us at the same level is just Sati overestimating my swordsmanship skill. There is a difference between someone born with talent and a person who practices.

But perhaps my strength really is fluctuating just like what she said. I will ask for Sergeant dono opinions tomorrow.

“I.....I will do my best.....that’s why.....”

Seems like she is halfway asleep during the massage. Due to her Recovery Magic practice, she exhausted most of her mana and right now she is too tired from the replenishing process.

“Well, as long she does it moderately, nothing is impossible.”

I put the futon on Sati, and while I move to next door, I mutter.

This time, she won’t die even if she loses. It is just a festival.

Chapter 8 ~ Sati's Intensive training ②

We went back to the Kingdom's capital once everyone finished having their breakfast at our home in the village. Sergeant dono will arrive later. Since there is a small training ground inside the elf mansion inside one of the corners of their garden, we've decided to train there.

Sati practice squad is busy during the morning of the first day of the festival, therefore she is having a free session in the morning.

And I alone did three set with Sati yesterday. It is too physically severe to serve as Sati's opponent all day. Even after getting the maximum cooperation, it is hard to work until you can't stand on your own feet.

But even so, about half of them decided not to go sightseeing at the capital. Instead, they stayed to observe the training session with Sergeant dono. So curious.

"First of all, let me see both of your skills after not meeting you guys for a long time."

Looks like he wants to observe my skills, too. I was nominated to be Sati's opponent. Before Sergeant dono arrived, I did a little warm-up exercise. Turn out, not being fully equipped is a blunder.

That doesn't mean I don't want to have a practice session with Sergeant dono. Just, if I were to face against him seriously, I rather be prepared for it. If possible, I wish that I am going to practice with Sati alone.

I faced against Sati. I think it is about time to get a win by using the transition sword, but Sati has a very high ability to respond thus making it easier for her to block it. As like all other hidden blade technique, once it is shown, the impact will be lesser the next time it is execute. There is no choice but to attack her straightforward.

I screamed, boosting my fighting spirit. Even if I cannot win, I will never show everyone my uncouth sight. By some chance my training is lacking, I will be left with no choice but to attend that special training again.

I made a great leap. Yesterday, I wasn't in the 'mood' yet. In Sati's word, I'm not at my strongest.

Remember, that hellish special training with Sergeant dono! Right now, this is the time for my true power to shine!!

I focus my attack entirely in that swing. I completely ignored my defence. I entrust my defence to my passive skills and my instinct. Whether it can be done or not, this is still wooden sword against metal armour we are talking about. During our simultaneous attack, Sati is more vulnerable to damage.

I concentrate my strength on the sword. However, not with all my might, I create a fine and compact swing.

Again, and again, our swords met. The gap between my ability and Sati's are not so big. Sometimes, my strike hit, and even Sati cannot handle them that easily.

But, as always, I am the one who received the victory strike. I got a light blow from on top of my plate.

"Sati, you need to put more strength in your attack. During the tournament, your fight will not stop from that degree of attack."

Sergeant dono told us while we are taking a break from attacking.

"Y, yes."

"Continue until I stop."

I fix my breathing.

There is also a way to do it while taking some damages. I feel like the training has become a step harder, but it is still within my tolerance level.

Our discussion continues.

“Stop. Sati.”

He immediately restrains her.

“Yes, Sergeant dono.”

“Use your legs more. Get familiar with this entire training ground and make use of it.”

“Yes.”

We resumed. Sati increases the use of her footwork. It is getting harder to keep with Sati now.

“Move faster! Lower the centre of your body! Swing your body to left and right!”

Sergeant dono continues to give his advices and Sati’s movement improves as she listened to it.

My sword——can no longer reach her!?

Her body barely swam through my swinging sword. *Clang*. I received a big strike on the tip of my shoulder. My balance got completely destroyed.

“Stop! Sati.”

“Y, yes.”

Sergeant dono called her and proceed to give her plenty of advices.

Her performance just now was good. Her strike would surely hit my bone if not for the metal part of my armour.

“You okay, Masaru?”

“Yes, I can still go.”

The match continues again and again. Sati’s eyes teared a little. Although this is just a practice, for the first time ever, she landed a

clean and effective hit. Maybe she was moved by that.

“Sati, your previous attack doesn’t leave a long-lasting damage at all. You have to put more power in your strike. If you don’t, you can never win the tournament.”

“Yes, Masaru sama.”

With a serious face, Sati nodded.

The match resumes. Sati who keeps her centre of body low quickly goes for an attack. This is bad, my defence is——her strike landed on my head. I fall on my backside.

Her initial attack is a feint when her aim is to strike my upper part all along.....I couldn’t read it at all. Perhaps, this is a technique that was taught to her by Sergeant dono.

“Just now was really good. I mean your move.”

I tell it to Sati while she is giving me a hand to pull me up.

My head hurts a little but still not enough to warrant a Heal.

“I’m fully equipped. This degree of attack is not enough to leave a damage.”

Again, I eased her off her concerns.

In fact, compared to that time when I was training with Sergeant dono without an armour, this kind of hit is no big deal at all.

“Sati!”

She was called by Sergeant dono, and again, received his advices.

After thinking about it for a while, Sati might overwhelm me completely at this rate.

Should I start using more footwork like Sati?

That is a bad idea. My footwork will be an inferior version of Sati’s, so without adequate preparation, mine will become a poor man copy.

I have to firmly planted my feet in the ground, so that I will not get misled with Sati's movement.

I sharpen my senses. Do not depends on my eyes alone.

Draw out strength on both of my hands.

I need to defend against Sati's incoming attack at all cost. If I am hit by Sati's attack again after this, she is going to cry.

No matter what kind of movement she has, there is only a single sword. Unless she gets into the effective range of her sword, her attack will never hit. That, I should identify. That is how it should be in theory.....

We resumed. Again, Sati uses her footwork, but this time with faster tempo. Oh? So, I thought, but her movement is unrefined. Is she forcing herself, hence making all her movements crude and unnatural? Well, this is Sati, I'm not surprised if anything suddenly happened.

But this is my chance. Taking advantages of this opening, I——

Sergeant dono declared the end of the session, and in about two hours, our training is over. Sati looks like she still has some energy to spare, but I'm already at my wit end.

From that point on, my attack landed on her properly and Sati is shaken. I don't feel that weak yet to avoid using more offensive battle style. But in the end, her movements get better and we become equal.

I may not be able to win anymore tomorrow.

"Tomorrow, the same time, okay?"

"Of course, we are fine with that arrangement. But is the Guild fine with it?"

"Don't worry. It is natural for the guild to concentrate on those who have a chance to aim for victory."

Looks like Sati is acting as the guild representative.

“With that said, I will depend on you again tomorrow.”

“Umu. By the way, are you sure you don’t want to enter? It will be a good experience.”

“I think that is a bit.....”

I don’t want to train the way of the swords. An ordinary training is good enough for me. If you simply want to measure strength, it is understandable that Sati is coming up top to some extent. I don’t need the prize money nor the fame. There is no reason for me to go out.

Besides, the competition will be held in a big stadium, enough to hold an official baseball game. The spectator’s numbers will be in tens of thousands. Absolutely impossible.

“For the last few years, the champion has always been the guild representative.”

That means the guild always recommended participants that are likely to win.

“Since Sati is already participating, there is no sense for me to do the same.”

“There is affinity factor to consider about too. Personally, I don’t think your ability is worse compared to Sati.”

“By the way, Sati told me how my power is fluctuating. Although, I was also told how there is not much difference in my ability.....”

“Certainly, your power really is uneven.”

“Was it that much.”

“Most of the time, a person can only muster up to half of his potential ability. It is training and experiences that make their power more stable.”

Because of that, this competition will serve as a good experience to you, says Sergeant dono.

Well, no matter what he said, I will never enter.

It is essential to become strong, but it is not strictly bind to the way of sword alone. My swordsmanship skills are raised to the max. In order to do that, I have no choice but to do more training, more arduous and more laborious compared compare to one during my magic training. They are very hard. Very painful. Yet the results are plainer than magic.

“There are many ways to become strong.”

Will Sergeant dono able to see through my Transition Sword? I want to try it out. He is already aware of how good I'm at Space Magic, I think it is okay to show him a short-range transition technique.

“If only you are not that competent with magic, then perhaps you can pursue the way of the sword.....no, there is no use to talk about it now.”

My heart hurts after hearing Sergeant dono evaluation. I cheated a lot for my own strength specifications this time as well. However, the way we are strengthening ourselves, we are going to hit the ceiling soon after.....

“I will leave it to Sati to master the way of the sword. Of course, I will never neglect my own training.”

Afterwards, there is no reason for Sergeant dono to overstay his welcome, so he returns back to the guild. Perhaps he is busy coaching all the participants.

“I'm going to take some break, what about you Sati?”

“I want to continue some more. I finally understand how to use my footwork.”

“Let's go back to the village, then.”

For the time being, I will pick up everyone here to the village. Ellie

will transport the rest.

Ellie is very cooperative during this event since this is one of the steps to raise the fame of our party and our family. The people who is taking care of our house is also coming to visit us here at the Kingdom's capital to show undivided support.

The elves unit is already in standby at the village. The elf has managed to gather a splendid amount of people. Some of them are as skilled as Titus, so each session takes sometimes to finish. Whenever someone got injured, Sati will stop, lend a hand and take a break too while watching the treatment.

Shira, who had been watching Sati kicking the elves around, said.

“My Lord is really strong. I never expect your strengths to be to this extent.”

Shira chan is from a very rural village in the frontier. She had never gone out from her village until the time she was taken as a slave, hence she only has the villagers to compare.

Although I'm also training myself, I wonder why my strength is not rising to par with Sati.

I had matches with Sati yesterday and even today, but when I finally see she kicks around the invited trainer is when things finally go through my head.

“Are you charmed?”

“If that is what you wished, my Lord, then I.....”

Shira chan was still a little shy about it when I try to incite the topic. I guess her view is still not very favourable to me. Determination or raising flags alone are not sufficient. I need to have a fateful encounter like that time with Lilia.

“Ah, they have finished their round. I'll be back.”

I tap on Shira chan's shoulder and head toward Sati. She neither answer “yes” or “no” to my advance. I wish there is a method to

measure the likelihood whether someone can be granted protection or not.

Since we have a large number of people, we decided to have lunch at the Elf Mansion in the Kingdom's capital. At the same time, Crook and Silva came to visit. I bet they are here for free foods. It was said that during this festival, the meals prepared inside the Elf Mansion is more delicious than usual to honour the princess.

They are entering the noble district for the first time, and it can be said that the stars were aligned for them to have these meals prepared at the same time.

“We really have a good friend!”

Silva nodded, agreeing to what Crook had said.

As soon they finished enjoying the meals, they went back home.

They don't intend to disturb our training. Only one, they left us a souvenir.

“Lazard san wishes to see you.”

“That is.....”

A business that person has with me is.....I cannot think other than a sparring match.

“Yeah. He just wants to have a little match before fighting in the tournament for real.”

“Sati will serve as his rival if he aims for the championship. Please tell him that it is impossible.”

“If you cannot do it during this competition, then afterwards is fine, too.”

“You serious.”

According to Sergeant dono, my ability is on par with him. Words of

gossips are damn scary.

“Is that so.....I will come to visit you again next time. So please don't refuse it next time.”

“Even if you told me not to refuse—”

“The meat of the dragon that we've defeated is coming out...”

“Alright, leave it to me!”

But that is a mistake. I noticed Shira chan is looking at me with a frown. I'm disqualified as warrior when I try to escape the duel.

Everyone knows me well, that is the feeling that I got. I am trusted, in that sense.

“I'm willing to settle any score with Lazard san. Just, not now.”

“Okay, should I tell him that?”

“W-well of course. Right now, I'm busy with practice. I will visit him when the suitable times has come.”

“That is so reckless.....but I will convey what you said properly.”

It's better than having Shira chan approval for me fall.

If our swordsmanship skills are equal, then I should be on top when I add my magic. Also, right after the festival end, I will be departing to the Empire, so there is no time to meet him.

I can watch how Lazard san fight seriously during the competition. There is still plenty of times to think of countermeasures.

“My Lord, is this Lazard person that was mentioned earlier strong?”

Shira chan asked me after those two went back home. Since she is always busy working as security at our home, once she is allowed to go outside, her schedule suddenly become free. Now she mostly sticks with Sati.

“His swordsmanship ability is pretty much on par with mine. In the

past, not many can stand to him as an enemy, though.”

“Why don’t you settle it with him immediately?”

“Just being equal is not good enough. It is not good unless I win.”

“Un, you are right. Losing is no good.”

My words managed to convince her.

Leuven also came to our practice in the afternoon. Ellie brought him to the village.

It’s fine to let him know about the Gate since she believes on him.

Olba san and Nania san are delighted to unexpectedly be reunited with Turks san. Then he comes to talk with Sati.

Indeed, he truly is a B rank guards whose level is approaching A rank. Sati’s sharp attacks were almost nullified by his skillful defense and strong heavy armor. Although Sati is using a wooden sword, she didn’t manage to land a single clean hit. However, Leuven has no means of attacking, so the pursuit to victory continues.

When it was my turn to try the offensive, I was overwhelmed by Sati. I was overwhelmed by a lot.

Leuven is good at following Sati’s movement. Unlike me, Leuven didn’t let Sati to stray away too far from him during their battle. He always put obstruction on the right place. Sati also didn’t let her opponent, Leuven, do whatever that he wanted.

If we are wearing leather armour, she needs to accumulate a pile of small effective strike in order to win. However, in this competition, even if she landed an effective strike, the rule allows the battle to continue. As for Sati, she cannot receive a blow from us at all, since it will be resulted to a heavy injury.

We have won and changed place for several times. Each battle, Sati has made some changes in her tactics. Clearly, she is building more

and more effective strike. She repeated hit and away tactic in order not to lose.

It seems like she is progressing well at first, but she still cannot get through our sword and shield cooperation. I wonder if she can find a weak point after fighting us over and over again. Sati's footwork has also been refined during this difficult training.

It is not possible to capture her. We cannot conclude the battle. When the battle got prolonged, both Leuven and my stamina has run out and that is reflected on our worsen movement.

On the contrary, Sati is still energetic.

We begin to leave some opening in the midst of our fight. Naturally, that is cause by my fluctuating strength.

When the dusk approached, we finally left a good single hit.

Next day. Just like previously, in the morning we received coaching from Sergeant dono. Afterwards, we repeated the long training until we reached the limit of our stamina. The elf compensates their lack of stamina with more numbers of personnel.

In the end, she didn't manage to master recovery magic before the qualifying. However, she already did intense training over a short period of time.

All beaten up, inside our house's training ground, after everyone has exhausted their strength to near death, only one person is standing up. Sati, who has never stop until the end, never let her knees on the ground. Just like that, the first day of gladiator tournament started.

Chapter 9 ~ Gladiator Competition, First Round Qualifier

My body feels very heavy.

The stamina that was lost during our three days intensive training to the brim of our limit will not simply recover overnight.

Sati who had fought for longer period must be suffering more.

“Are you okay, Sati?”

“I’m not in the perfect condition, but I’m fine.”

We did a warmup this morning and from what I observed, she faces no difficulty to execute her move. She will not face any problem during qualifying.

The contestant is considered to triumph the first qualifying round with triple victories, and as soon they lose two matches, they are disqualified.

Besides that, there isn’t much difference between the qualifying round and the main battle in terms that the battle ended when one of the fighter falls. If someone landed a valid hit, based on the judging the winner might be selected.

Since there are a lot of participant, it isn’t possible to spend too much time in a battle.

There are still sometimes before the qualifying starts, so there are a lot of people still scattered around the stadium. Most of them are packing in front of the bulletin board to see the matches combinations.

Naturally, most of those people are the participants themselves. They

all are huge muscle-head bastards.

However, there is no need for us to bother ourselves to see it up close. We have Hawk Eye, after all.

“I can see it, over there.”

“That one huh, number 777. That is a nice number.”

It is not as if there is a superstition among others that is particularly linked with this number, but it is still a nice number, nevertheless.

Number 777 is the sixteenth match for today. Next, I’m taking the bib from the registration counter. Before the matches start, we have to confirm the borrowed equipment that will be carried on.

The betting ticket will only be released tomorrow. The winning odds are decided based on today’s fighting performance. In other word, it is impossible to bet on Sati overwhelming victory. What a shame.

Once I returned to where everyone is, I told Sati her number and her matches, then I encouraged her and get to the avenue.

Only three of us are going, me, Ann and Sati.

Me and Ann entered the venue as the volunteering healing surgeons from the shrine. Everyone else will be watching by using the tickets procured by the elves residing in the Kingdom’s capital.

Although the shrine is in fully cooperation with the competition, due to the influx of people coming to the Kingdom’s capital during the festival period, there are shortage of hand among their healing surgeons. They also requested for assistance from neighbouring region, however due to the situation where there are still not enough hands during the festival period, all volunteers are welcome.

After Sati finished checking up on her equipment, and once she makes the confirmation, she enters the venue. In the meanwhile, me and Ann enters the venue by another route. We listened to the briefing regarding our job scope for today.

Once I slipped myself inside the priest’s robe, by no means am I

friend with my comrade of arm anymore. I can talk to the person on top properly though.

Basically, we are to follow the instruction of the referee in each venue and cure the first injured person in front of our eyes.

Since I am an external help, I am required to assist in the place where there is shortage of hand. I am not really interested to help unless I get to go to where Sati is.

I separate myself from Ann and look for Sati's venue.

The sixteenth match venue was set at the middle of the stadium.

There isn't anything like a rope prepared. The venue is just a little bigger than a ring meant for professional wrestling or boxing tournament based on the line drawn on the ground.

There are around 50 participants inside one venue. The participants gradually gathered around the battleground and waited.

I too decided to stay over here silently.

Inside where Sati's scheduled match is placed, there is a middle-aged priest and he greeted me. I took out a chair from Item Box and sit next to him.

"Oho? I thought I was the only one assigned here?"

"I am a reserved. Since there are lacking personnel everywhere, I am tasked to help curing whenever there are a people with severe injury."

"I see. I am Careis from Hazel Village."

"I am Masaru. I am from the Siory town, an adventurer."

"An adventurer you said?"

"This robe was given to me by my priestess wife. Since I often help and take care of the shrine, I got this robe for works."

I am also dispatched from the Adventurer Guild, and actually that kind of story isn't unusual. That much seems to have convinced him.

However,

“Speaking about the Siory town, did you hear anything about the travelling Masked Priest?”

“Ah, if it's only about the rumours.....”

While listening to his story, I find there are minor exaggeration, so I lightly corrected him.

“That is not the story that I have heard before, though. The truth of what happening is——”

“Sigh—well, that is reality for you.”

Whether it is the wild rabbit or the masked priest, I wonder if the rule about rumours disappearing after 75 days applied to this world or not.

Don't tell me, the rumours already fly all the way to the Empire.....?

I asked him to tell me about various thing.

The real thing is more severe than I initially thought. If one is not prepared, then it is not shocking if someone ended up dead during the preliminary.

“If someone got instantly killed, then even with our treatment.....”

He taught me several causes that usually lead to death. Pierced by weapons or broken neck. The real-life description makes them sounds grotesque.

This is a world where a strong enough person can overthrow a large dragon with a single sword. And there is no comparison between a normal fragile human body and a dragon.

Of course, since this is a competition during the festivals, there are precautions taken to ensure that deliberate killing an opponent is

prevented. Yet, the contestants will still be fighting with all their might or otherwise, the battle will not be exciting.

I'm gradually become worried about Sati.

I'm sure she will be fine, but there are always some possibilities. Glad I could be nearby.....

The game began while I was eating with the priest.

Sati's turn will be at the middle of competition today. Opposite to me, she sits on the ground while mixing with all other participants. Apart from her occasionally glancing over here, it seems that she still retains her strength.

The battle was as intense as it was described.

If the gap between the abilities are apparent, then it is easier to do the judging. However, if they are about equal, then it is difficult for the referee to make the judgement. Equipped with an iron sword and leather armour, both parties are fighting for a kill. Their bones got crushed, and their bloods splashes. The participant might get a seriously injured.

But for such level there doesn't seems to be that much people who is very strong too.

Indeed, this is at the level where Crook and the others might not win at all. The enemies rival me and Sati.

But still, that doesn't make it easier for me as spectator. We alternate our role when it comes to minor injury, and when it is more severe, both of us will treat them at the same time.

Sometimes, I was asked to support the other group at the different venue, so I'm pretty busy.

And after I returned, it was just in time for Sati's fight to start.

"This time it is a small girl."

“But the opponent doesn’t seem to be that strong, too.”

I can only see the back of her opponent, the number 776. Right now, half of Sati’s appearance is hidden from my eyes too.

“Yeah. I wish both of them will not get injured.”

Everyone is fighting with all their might. More people get injured than I thought. It is strange to see that nobody is dead yet.

While I was trying to move to another place with better view on the ring, I heard the signal to start the battle, and immediately afterwards, I can hear the winner announcement.

Looks like the battle was finished in an instant.

Well this is Sati we are talking about; she is way overqualified.

Winner, number 776!”

Number 776.....number 776!?

Sati went outside the ring and came here with a pale face.

“I lost.....”

Is this for real...

“How’s your injury?”

“There is no need for any treatment.”

“You still have other battle to participate, that’s why let me heal you for the time being. So, what actually happened?”

“.....without I’m realizing it, I was already blown away.”

“Do you know them?”

“Yeah. I came across their party last time.”

“This competition is really high level. Do not get too distracted.”

Either Sati is having a difficult day, or the level of this competition is too high, which is it!?

Immediately, the call for number 776 second fight started.

Due to the shortage in time, the winner will be decided by them fighting as it is.

Once the signal for the start is released, number 776 immediately closes themselves to the opponent, and as soon the opponent was able to react, the sword was already put at the opponent's neck.

It's certainly a strange move, but it is not fast enough to hit someone by surprise. However, the opponent wasn't aware of what happened, and they are staring off in puzzlement.

"Winner, number 776."

Once again, number 776 was announced as the victor.

Number 776 turned around and look over here. Our eyes met. I instantly got a chill.

This is bad. It is outrageous to think that he looks anything but strong. Perhaps his age is around 30 years old. He has a gentle demeanour, but his postures exude no opening whatsoever.

The third battle. This time, his movement is normal. However, he still takes out his opponent quickly with a single blow. Another stops directly before the blow hit. It was just like the opponent does not serve as one at all.

At first glance, he doesn't look all that strong. However, he doesn't look weak either. I cannot measure his strength.

Once the battle is over, number 776 strut down here.

"Young girl, I don't mean to hurt you in any way but if I do hit you, that wasn't intentional. Your move is really good."

"I'm just fine....."

“Do you not understand why you lost?”

“Yes.”

Why couldn't Sati react? Even the opponent from the earlier match experienced the same thing.

I heard a story about something like this somewhere before.....

“[Mubyōshi-uchi](#)” [tl.note: no motion attack]

“Huh?”

“It is an abrupt attack that makes your opponent lose their balance before making their first strike.”

“Mr. Priest here got it correct! No, it is a waste that you are just a priest.”

I thought that kind of attack only existed in manga, who knows it is applicable in real life.

“Is it fine to explain it to us and make it really understandable?”

“It is just a clever scheme. It will not always be successful.”

In other words, he is confident on his victory even after spilling out his secret. He is very formidable himself.

“Don't glower at me like that. Since this young lady is strong, she will surely qualify. If we meet again tomorrow, it will be in the main battle.”

Just like that, number 776 went away.

“My physical condition is perfectly fine.....”

Sati told me that it feels mortifying. I cannot simply cheer her up after witnessing something like that.

“This world is wide.”

I'm glad that I'm not participating. If not, there is undoubtedly that

I'm going to have an upset stomach.

Sati's next turn comes again after 2 hours, and this time Sati managed to safely defeat all her opponents in the remaining fight out of three.

As expected, Sati is in completely different level compared to the other participants. There is a remarkable difference in their speed.

It just that number 776 happened to be a powerful opponent.

The problem right now is how many powerful opponents like that are inside this competition.

“What to do next Sati? Shall we join with everyone?”

“Let's gather everyone here.”

After Sati's matches are over, I cannot go back home.

Although the matches here progressing fast, depending on the location, some of the battles are prolonged, so it is unlikely that we can see the end yet.

Despite we all come here to spectate Sati, after the second half of qualifying, the only participants remaining are those who only suffered one defeats or win three consecutive wins.

I failed to find anyone who might serve as Sati potential rival.

And then, late afternoon, all battle is finally finished, thus marking the end of the first qualifying round.

While waiting for Sati, I was mixed inside the gathering point for all priest.

Ann was.....over there.

“Thank you for everyone hard work today. With everyone help, the first qualifying round ended without a single death among the contestant. Since the number of matches will decreases significantly starting from tomorrow, unless otherwise specified, those who works

as volunteer are no longer required to work. If you wish to spectate tomorrow's battle, you can do so at these special seats——”

Since I was not instructed anything, my turns appear to end by today. I will be troubled if my assistance is required for longer period, so this suits me pretty much.

While listening to the admirable looking man speech, I approached and call out Ann.

“Ah, Masaru. Splendid work. How was Sati.”

Together with Ann, we walked out from the priest gathering and we talked while walking.

“She lost a game but passed the qualifying. Naturally she managed to pass without any injury.”

“She loses!?”

“That one particular person is too strong. His attack feels like a surprise.”

“So, we really can't win that easily, after all.”

Sati found us and come running to us.

“What are you going to do after this, Ann?”

“I don't have anything particular to do later today.”

“Then let's go back. The elves are preparing a luxurious dinner today as well.”

Everyone should already be at home. If there is nothing else to do, then we better go straight home too.

No, I need to drop by at the guild for a while and report today's event to Sergeant dono. There is something that I would like to ask as well.

Such thought float in my mind while we go for the stadium exit, and at that moment, Angela! Someone shouted.

A woman wrapped in a priest garb can be seen heading towards here. She is a petite, floaty lady with a natural blonde perm hair, a cute lady with a set of round eyes.

“Acquaintances?”

“Rosa Beltrami. We attend the same theological school.”

“Long time no see, Angela. And these persons are?”

“This is Masaru, my husband. This is Sati. She is Masaru’s other wife and a participant in this competition.”

“Oh my? I heard that you married an adventurer but.....”

“Masaru is also great at using Recovery Magic. In fact, today he is here to help.”

“Fuun.....you look great. How is life as an adventurer?”

“Well, a lot happened.”

Certainly, there is a lot of unspeakable thing.

“Why don’t we find a place to slowly talk about things. Want to go eat somewhere after this?”

“Umm that.”

Ann looks at me while saying so.

“Why don’t you invite her over for dinner? Or else it is fine if you two go somewhere else.”

“Let’s do that then. I’m preparing the dinner at my place. If you don’t mind, why don’t you join us for dinner?”

“Please pardon my intrusion, Mr. husband.”

“Come, come. An additional person will not bother us.”

“If you said so, then I will do as you said. The mansion is located at.....”

“It is fun after not meeting for so long, right?”

Ann was a bit surprised to find her friend here.

“Of course, I’m glad. Just recently, I was——”

After that, she proudly tells about her recent accomplishment. She energetically breaks down about her role being the youngest priest working at the Kingdom’s capital shrine branch, and how she is among the successful one among her peers.

Then she talks about the direction of her peers, a talk that I can’t help but to listen. There is no story about man at all.

Seems like the theological school is different for man and woman. Rosa chan was too preoccupied with work to talk about anything else.

“So, I plan to move to the great shrine next.”

“Wow, ain’t that amazing!”

The great shrine is the head shrine that worship Mithril divinity.

In other words, a promotion to the headquarters, the elite course. After returning from the service at the Kingdom’s capital, anyone can climb to a bishop or great priests’ position, or so it was said.

“If Angela remains at the Kingdom’s capital like me, then you can also enjoy the benefit of career advancement.....it is a waste for you to retire at the countryside like Siory.”

Ann seems to be an excellent student among her classmates.

“Right now, I live in the upper part of the region.”

“The upper part, isn’t that the most remote region at the frontier!”

“Which part of the capital do you live now?”

“That is.....unlike you adventurer I cannot simply live wherever I want.”

“There are various things that happened too suddenly.”

“Are you really fine doing the adventuring works? Angela, aren’t you struggling?”

“There are dangers on its own way, however my party earn good money you know? I mean, look.”

While saying that, she took out her adventurer card and show it.

“B rank!?”

“Masaru is an A rank you know.”

“That is amazing.....just for a bit, Mr. husband, is that fine? I was worried since a while ago.”

Rosa chan says so and reached to me.

“Go ahead,” with Ann permission, she put her hands on my shoulder.

Apparently, she wants to check my mana.

“!?”

Rosa chan quickly pick up her hands, and this time, she is hesitating to put her hand on my shoulder again.

“Surprised?”

“T-that is amazing.”

“Even among the elves, there is nobody with that amount of mana.”

“If anything, I wonder if that is too much.”

“Did you know that there is an Elf Country at the upper part of this region? Everyone meets the elf, but——”

While listening over both of them chattering, we stop by at the Adventurer Guild on the way home, briefly make my report and invite Sergeant dono for dinner.

Looks like Sergeant dono will return to his lodging first and he will come later after changing clothes. Well, he is going to have a meal at an aristocrat mansion, there is no way he will turn up in a leather armour.

And then, we arrived at the Elf Mansion located in the Noble District.

The Elf Mansion, aside from being used as the elf magician unit station, they are also used as an R&R for both servants and royalty. It also functions as embassy, so overall the mansion is big and impressive even compared to other noble's houses.

"The Elf Mansion.....you have connection with the elf?"

"About so."

Like always, the elf employees and security guards line up and welcomes us politely.

"One of his wives is an elf. Um, we have two visitors today, is that okay?"

"Two more persons, correct. Understood. I think we can prepare the dishes in about 30 minutes."

We head to the living room, passing through the elves who carefully lowered their head.

"Wait a sec, Angela. It feels like you are being treated as the guest of honour!"

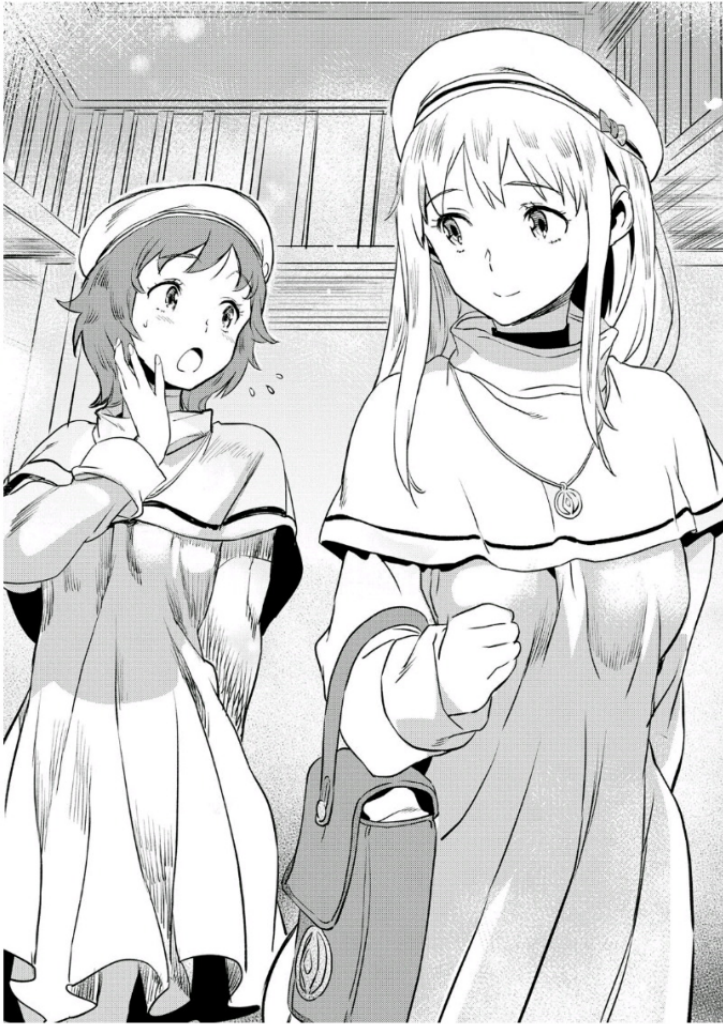
"We are the guests of honour. I want you to keep this silent. Actually, he married an elf royalty. I will introduce you to her soon."

"Adventurer who has ranked up are really something, aren't they....."?

"Both the rank and the mansion are merely the result. He actually risked his life a few times."

Rosa chan, after living in the countryside for a while, appears to have sympathy for the livelihood of a common adventurer, so when she

sees how extravagant our living condition is, she got a mixed feeling.



“Eh, a territory!?”

“Correct. Masaru is phenomenally good in Earth Magic, so——”

After we settled down in the living room and the family introduction is over, this time, it was Ann’s turn.

Due to our connection with the elf royal family, there is a plan to build a shrine inside the territory. It is confirmed that a shrine is going to be build inside our village, but there is also a discussion regarding a shrine being build inside the elf territory.

The elf believes in the same God as humans, although in quite a different form. The elf doesn't build a shrine. Instead, they worship the God through Spirit, so there has never been a shrine built inside the Elf Country.

"If the approval to build a shrine inside the elf territory is received, then it will become the greatest achievement in the last decades."

However, the elderly elf lives a long life, and they are very stubborn. If it is something practical, then they are not going to interfere. But it is another thing if it involves faith. It was said that the elf already has something equivalent to the human priest.

There is also the matter regarding the necessity of a shrine. The shrine works are divided into three different division, with an exception for the part relating to faith.

The military division, Templar Knight. The clinic. The orphanage administration. All of those are already provided by the elf, so they are not necessary.

Whether to accept the proposal or not, these elves tend to take a long time to think over projects that is not required to be finished in hurry. They will not give us an immediate decision.

"Even to get them to consider it is already an astounding accomplishment, Angela!"

"We also plan to have a discussion with the chief priest of Laforet while we are still here in the royal city."

"Eeh!? Even I have done nothing more than a greeting."

The chief priest of the Kingdom's capital is the head of the kingdom's shrine.

The matter has increasingly turn serious for obvious reason, but it is

still impossible to report our family composition honestly to the priest or the shrine side.

It is not something we are really secretive about, however if we are not silent and it got exposed then their confidence on us will be questioned. Well, that time during the masked priest incident, everyone got united and firmly held their tongue. If you ask, then I can confidently say that the matter will never leak outside.

It will never be that important, so it is fine.

While we are chatting, Sergeant dono finally arrived and we started to eat our meal.

At the other side, Ann is telling us the story about her student days, however at this side, I'm having a discussion with Sergeant dono.

"I am familiar with that skill. I will tell you how to counter it later."

"Yes, thank you very much."

The Mubyōshi-uchi. It is difficult to learn, and it held no effect on monster. For that reason, that technique is not taught at the Adventurer Guild.

"If you seriously want to learn about it, I suggest you go to Biels. After this festival end, you are heading to Empire next, aren't you?"

"Yes, that was our plan anyway."

Biels, otherwise known as the land where adventurer retires. It is also called as the swordsman training ground. Sergeant dono master, the Sword Saint is currently residing there.

"Oh, the sacred land of sword. I definitely want to go there!"

"I'd love to go too."

I don't feel like going, but it will be necessary for Sati. If she continues to grow stronger, then I will lose for sure during our training.

“I understand. I will visit once I get the opportunities.”

“That is good. I’m sure it will be a fruitful experience.”

Hopefully it will not be a painful experience.....

Chapter 10 ~ Sati, Learning

After dinner, we all go to the training ground located inside the Elf Mansion. There, we learn how to counter the Mubyōshi-uchi from Sergeant dono.

Like usual, I join in together to receive the guidance. Since it seems like we are learning something awesome, everyone else come to see too.

However, when I watch her this time, the brilliance that Sati has shown every day during practice session has paled, and even though she is still showing a good spectacle, this time they feel blander for some reason.

No matter how much I am coffered as the master of this house, this is still the Elf Mansion first and foremost. I can't forbid those elves from watching out of boredom even if I wanted to.

Well, no matter what the occurrence is, I am the person whom people usually resent.....

I prepared the light equipment like the wooden sword and the leather armour and passed them to Sergeant dono and Sati.

“The easiest method is to create a significant distance between you and your opponent.”

It is quite easy. Today's qualifying round is narrowed inside a ring. The Mubyōshi-uchi requires the user to close the gap with their opponent in a fraction of second, hence it cannot be used if there is a distance between them. And from tomorrow on, the ring will be the same size like in the main battle, so they are going to be wider.

By taking some distance, we will never receive the hit once we timed our move exactly like our opponent.

Yet, we can never call this the most effective way of dealing with it.

“Get used to it. See right through it.”

The difficulty level suddenly rises to a great leap. It's becoming unreasonable.

There is no helping it even if I complained. It was decided that he is going to demonstrate it first with me.

I grip my sword and shield tightly against the incoming Sergeant dono.

I have already seen the technique once, and I also understood what kind of technique it is. I don't think I will get hit by it that easily..... while thinking about such thing, I noticed Sergeant dono make an abrupt move, and *don*, his wooden sword tapped my shoulder.

“O, oh.....?”

I cannot comprehend what has happened very well. My eyes have continuously been on Sergeant dono in front of me and I never diverted them even for a moment.

It was neither my own negligence nor a surprise attack. I knew it was coming, yet I couldn't avoid it. When I received the blow, it felt like I was pinched/hold up/pick up by a fox.

Or perhaps I will get used to it over time. Not even Sergeant dono understood it that much.

“One you are hit with it for several more times, you should be used to how it is executed and able to prevent it. If necessary, I can keep you company for the whole night.”

Apparently, there does not exist a specific countermeasure.

“No, I don't need that much time. I already understand.”

Whether Sati managed to grasp the technique with that one-time display or not, she proclaimed so and replace my place. She is brimming with confidence.

Those two face each other. Both keep their cool, staying from each other while keeping their power in check enough to think they are not going to fight.

Nevertheless, I know that Sati concentration is at its max due to her serious demeanour. Perhaps she can do it after concentrating that much.

Sergeant dono moved—a sound can be heard; Sati sword jumps to intercept Sergeant dono wooden sword.

She takes a deep breath. Then Sati releases the tension in her body.

“Darn amazing, Sati.....”

“Yes!”

Then, she looks this way happily.

“You managed to fully grasp it after being shown once, as expected.”

No, seriously.

“How did you do it, Sati?”

“I listen to his movement with my ears.”

Her ears twitches while saying that.

A hearing detection skill.....I have that detection skill too. If normal method cannot be used, then it is worth it to try the alternative.

“I would like to ask for one more time, please.”

I fully opened my presence detection, and then I confront him. Even though I have raised the skill's level and increases its accuracy, originally it is used for wide area. I don't know whether it will work or not. If it doesn't work, then should I pick up the hearing detection skill?

Sergeant dono presence starts to shake before my eyes.

He is coming. Centre, torso———just barely, I stopped his wooden

sword with my shield.

Sergeant dono face visibly shown his surprise.

Why doesn't he show a surprised face when it was Sati.....?

"Masaru sama is amazing too!"

Pleased with my performance, Sati clapped her hands.

Unlike Sati, I barely stopped his strike.

"Both of you managed to block that hit to this extent.....I am surprised, very much surprised.

It is all thanks to the skill. Although, for Sati, she might be able to block that attack anyhow without the presence detection skill, but it is impossible for me.

I wonder if the presence detection will be useful for adjacent fight as well. I was trying not to use it much during battle to avoid my focus from being widespread.

"Excuse me, we don't really understand what is going on."

One of the elves who is helping with Sati's practice spoken, after raising his hand.

Well, I guess so. From the onlooker perspective, it must have seen like Sergeant dono has only landed a normal blow. Then we guard against it normally.

Since these people never get hit by that strike, they will have difficulty to understand what is going on.

"I will let those who are interested experience it."

"Yes, please!"

Nearly 20 people has queued up in a row, including Ann, Ellie, Tilika and Shira. After setting me and Sati in a place with a good viewing, he proceeds to land a blow on each of them.

Naturally, they are not disturbed and the strike lead to their surprise and make them stunned. Some of them were unable to grasp it and asked for a second time, but the result still ended up same. It is not something that can be easily be understood.

I have been watching the move thoroughly, but it seems that there is no fixed move set. Was there a common thing that is shared between the foot movement and the distance with the opponent?

“Do you understand?”

“I feel like I can do something about it.”

If Sati said so, then she really means it.

While we are talking about it, something unexpected occurred.

When Lilia tried it again for the second time, this time she managed to block the attack.

Cheers were raised from the elves. Lilia herself were unable to respond to it, however her spirit Auto Guard was activated. Naturally, in the competition this technique is forbidden and will lead to foul play.

Nevertheless, if we exempted the competition rule, there are various possibility to deals with this technique. It can be negated by both magic and skill, and there is not particularly need for a one on one encounter. Our primary opponent isn't human being in the first place; hence this technique isn't that much of a threat as I first thought.

“We are going to end this session for today.”

In the end, after making me and Sati face it for several more times, he concluded that Sati can now block that attack and finishes his instruction.

Well, my blocking technique is dubious still, this is primarily for Sati, so I guess it is fine.

“Thank you very much, Sergeant dono. You are a great help.”

“Thank you very much, Sergeant dono!”

“This is part of my job. Also, the foods were a treat.”

“Whenever you feel like eating, you can come by anytime. You will be welcomed.”

This isn’t my house, but this much is fine. We have more ingredients than we can possibly hope to finish.

“Then we can safely say the next time you meet it will end with our celebration of victory.”

“Yes, please leave it to me!”

Sati answers energetically.

Having meeting Sergeant dono expectation, he went back home satisfied.

“Should we practice a little bit more?”

After I sent off Sergeant dono, I came back to the training ground and asked Sati.

I also want to try more battle technique that utilizes presence detection.

“Yes. Most of my fatigue has wear off. I can still move a lot.”

Sati went for another 4 rounds today. Almost everyone loses instantaneously to her. Since we just finished having a meal, the training session is lighter. Sati feels a slight unsatisfied due to how light is the exercise.

“Alright. Let’s go for another one rounder.”

Should we go back home and continue it at our dojo? Using Gate is.....a bad choice here. Ann friend had come over. Since it’s too troublesome, we will just continue here.

“Thanks for your work, everyone. I’m going to practice with Sati

alone, so I ask everyone else to dissolve. Ellie, I will leave it to you. You can go ahead.”

“I know.”

After hearing a one-line reply from Ellie, I turn toward Sati.

“Why don’t we start, then.”

Sati nodded. This is going to be like our usual practice. There is no need for an early arrangement.

I prepare to block her hit in advance. This is how I normally start my fight. Sati evaded, received a blow, and fight back.

I calm my nerve. If it is like the usual practice, then I will never land a hit on Sati.

When I think about it, for the past few days I have been practising with her. It is fun practising swordsmanship with Sati without hurting her. Even if her opponent attack past through, even if I made a mistake, it will still be safe since it will be stopped.

Sati is making the most from what she has learned in her special training for the past few days and make a great move. Though, it is still within my expectation since I have been attending the special training as much as long. I received them and avoid them without any problem.

I wield my sword while activating the Presence Detection. Even though it helped to prevent the Mubyōshi-uchi, it wears out the sense of visual and sensation so much that it became a hindrance in normal fight. Moreover, even if you can sense the body movement, eventually you still need to depend on your vision to see the trajectory of the weapon. It is not very good.

After a while, I began to sweat a lot. I took a rest and regulate my breathing, and then I asked Sati.

“How useful is the Hearing Detection?”

“Let’s see. The more you move, the more your focus will detach from

your opponent, so with this skill it feel like that part is covered somehow.....”

It is said to help us know the weapon trajectory even without looking at it. However, the accuracy will greatly degrade during battle. For now.

The same applies to Sati. She doesn't have much experience incorporating the skill actively during melee combat, but if she managed to get used to it then it will become more usable.

Should I take Hearing Detection? Right now, I don't have extra points to afford, but I can collect enough by cutting away some skills. For example, I didn't use summoning level 4 so far.

There is no need to think about it, really.

Reset. Lower Summoning Magic from level 4 to level 3. Increase Hearing Detection to level 2.

I try to activate Hearing Detection.

“Hey, Angela husband, is he a magician.....”

Oh, I can hear the chats from further away very clearly.

“Fufu. Isn't his swordsmanship very awesome?”

“I've watched the competition for every year, so I say he definitely is in a level where he could compete in the main battle. Not to mention his Mana.....also his magic ability?”

“As for Masaru, magic is his main forte. Didn't I tell you that his is more than an elf.”

“Exactly like what Angela sama said, Masaru sama magic is way greater than us elf——”

Eavesdropping another people chat is interesting, but that is not my main objective.

Swinging my sword. Moving my body. Threading on my feet.

Certainly, all the sounds are transmitted back to me. But that's it. I couldn't relate the sound and moving image together. It is not only because it is still level 2, but it also has something to do with experience.

It is not a waste, but it isn't something that can be used immediately. A practice for a while is necessary.

"Sati, we've broken a lot of sweats now, so I think it is time to stop."

She still needs to practice Recovery Magic, and considering tomorrow, it is not advisable to stay up very late.

"Um, today is about me, so if possible, I would like to practice more."

Sati requested with upturned eyes. For some reason it feels like her usual self has changed. It is rare for Sati to demand this much.

"Then, should we continue?"

Activate Hearing Detection. Then, I turn my stance towards Sati.

However, when I activated the Hearing Detection, the sound of wooden swords clashing echoed uncomfortably in my head. I wonder how Sati handled it when she is at level 5. I must ask her later.

After going for a while, I finally give up. I already hit the limit of my physical strength.

In the meanwhile, Ann's friend, Rosa chan has went back home, so I opened the Gate to the village and went back with Ann and Shira chan who has waited till the end.

Me together with Sati went straight to my room. I decided to supervise her Recovery Magic practice later. I will postpone writing my diary for now.

"I need to take a bath....."

"Don't mind it, don't mind it."

"I-I have to take off my armour."

“It’s okay, it’s okay.”

Me as well. She has a match tomorrow, so I thought it would be best to conserve her strength for now. It’s bad enough that I was unable to reject Sati request.

I push down Sati into bed, then I proceed to carefully peel off her body off her armour, carefully examined her body that is still chewed up from the previous battle——

During our bath, while we are rinsing off our sweats, I have her teach me about Hearing Detection. You can predict the direction to some extent by filtering out the sound that you detected.

Sati doesn’t understand it well too. Seems like she is not just picking up the sound with her ears. There must be magic elements involved. Otherwise, your eardrum might burst as soon as you increase the sensitivity.

When I try to think about a useful implementation, I couldn’t think of anything that can be effective immediately like when intercepting the Mubyōshi-uchi. Still, it is still better than Summoning Magic level 4, which I have not used at all. So, I decided to use this skill for a while and see how it goes. It’s convenient when you want to eavesdrop another people conversation.

I rise from the bathtub and then I will practice Recovery Magic for a while before hitting the bed.

We wore our pyjamas, sit while facing each other on the bed, and then I reconfirm the state of her training so far.

“I may not have a knack for it.....”

“This is only your third day of training, right? Usually, this training takes a whole month.”

For the time being, I used the same method as when I practiced with Ann.

By using a knife, she makes a cut at the tip of her index finger. Her

groans left her mouth while she is activating her mana. As expected, it is a failure.

“You need more power. Take a deep breath and be more relaxed. Yes, yes. Then create the image in your head. Think about making the wound heals. Cure, return back to the original finger image.”

“Image.....image.....”

Her mana vanishes in the air wastefully. The small wound no longer has blood flowing out of it. Even if left as it is, the wound will most likely heal naturally.

But still, isn't there any method besides hurting your finger over and over? It's unpleasant to watch Sati hurting her finger again and again. I can call Will here and beat him in the name of training..... but that is too much.

Ah, why don't I replace her myself.

“Sati, the knife.”

“Yes”, and she hand me the knife obediently. I received the knife and push it against the palm of my hand while exerting a lot of strength. I hesitated from how scary it is, but I still cut it with one go. It hurts.

“A, aahh!?”

Sati raised a small scream.

Blood oozes from the wounds on the palm of your hand. It hurts a bit. Even after I have built a resistance from being cut by Sergeant dono many times before, what hurts will still hurt.

“Sati. Right now, you are the only one who can cure my wounds. If you leave it as it is, I will lose too much blood and die.”

In other word, I create a situation.

When I pretence to speak like this, Sati will be desperate.

“Eeeee!?”

“Calm down. The Recovery Magic. Sati mana is not much. You cannot afford to fail many times. Stay focused.”

“Y, yes.”

Did I cut it a tad too deep? Somehow the bloods are pouring out a lot.....

I tried to stop the overflowing bloods from my palm with a towel. The towel quickly gets soaked blood red.

“Heal.”

A failure.

“Heal!”

Again, a failure. The towel is now dyed red.

Sati bites her lips in tears.

“It’s okay. You have the God divine protection. You will master it without fail. You need to draw more strength. You just need to collect some more mana and things will be fine.”

The blood continues flow.

Don’t tell me I’ve cut a blood vessel? I feel a bit uneasy now. Do your best, Sati!

“Okay.....image. Cure it. To cure. Absolutely.....”

Fail.

Fail.

Fail.

Sati’s mana almost run out. If she still can’t do it, I will heal myself with Miracle Light and charge her mana, and that is for today. Just went I thought I could go.

“Sati, the next one is the last.”



“Ah, my mana.....”

Seems like she is aware that she almost exhausted her own mana.

“Please, please. If I couldn’t do it, Masaru sama will die. He already lost this much blood.”

Hearing her delicate murmur is impossible with my ordinary hearing,

but I do catch it up with Hearing Detection.

Yeah. There is no way I'm dying with this degree of cut.

But did I push her into a corner by saying that I will die?

"Heal!"

Mana gathers on Sati's hand——

【Heal (Small) 】 activated.

The spell invoked without a mistake. The pain gradually disappeared.

"I.....did it?"

Sati feels a good response.

After wiping the bloods with towel, the wound is completely gone.

"Yeah, it's a success. Well done, Sati."

I said that while rubbing her head.

With level 1 the skills can be used properly. Like this, she will make no more failure.

"T-thanks God. Your hand is full of bloods.....I was at lost at what to do....."

She is crying from feeling relieved.

"Now, now, there is no need to cry. From hereafter, whenever I got hurt, Sati can come and heal my injury."

She now has a trump card up her sleeves for the upcoming match.

You can't expect the Heal (small) to be much effective, and she can't openly display the skill as it will cause an uproar when a beastmen uses magic. But at least, she has more tricks in her hand.

"Please don't do thing like this anymore."

Saty says while wiping the blood on my palm with a wet towel.

“Un. Forgive me, Sati.”

I never thought that blood would come out pouring like river.

I’m sure that was bad for Sati’s heart.

“But I believed that Sati could do it.”

I said so, and tightly hugged Sati.

“You did very well today too, Sati.”

“Yes, Masaru sama. I will give my best for tomorrow’s qualifying match too.”

“Well, do your best, but in moderation.”

“Is that so?”

“Just like Sergeant dono or that guy in today’s match, there are many strong people in this world. We only have half a year of sword practice. So, it is okay even if we lose sometimes.”

It has been seven months since I have arrived here. About six months after I bought Sati.

“Half a year.....it is still only half a year, wasn’t it?”

“Yeah.”

“Even after 20 years.....”

“Even after 20 more years.”

Whether the end of the world comes.

“Even after decades, I will stay by Sati’s side for all eternity. That is my promise.”

I still have plenty of times. Somehow or another, we will preserve. Surely.

Chapter 11 ~ Gladiator Competition, Second Round Qualifier —Audience—

“Last night, Sati finally managed to master Recovery Magic.”

I report to everyone during breakfast. We are currently in the dining room, and right now there is only us, a family.

“Once chan, amazing.”

“But I can only cast small Heal for now,”

“Even so, it’s still a great advantage for the frontline fighter to be able to use Recovery Magic themselves. Even with the small Heal, you can still fix broken bones or stop bleeding.”

“This is just the fourth day since she has started. Was our learning process accelerated by the divine protection during our practice with Masaru?”

“I don’t know if it was the protection, but I tore my hand with a knife.”

““““Wha——””””

During my explanation, they gasped when I gestured how I cut my own hand.

And right now, what unfolded in front of me is the gladiator competition.

The second day of qualifying is done in a mini tournament style. Those who win three matches advance to the main competition.

I think Sati will do just fine, however this time her opponents are

those who have passed the first qualifying round, too. And unlike yesterday, today she couldn't afford to lose any single match.

Just like yesterday, today I went to see the matches in pair with Sati. We go to the bulletin board located outside the fighting area.

Sati is in the third group. There seems to be other group with only seven contestants. Those groups are getting a rearrangement, but Sati group is already full of eight contestants.

The odds are eight time as much. One defeat is enough to affect everything.

Together in the same group is this yank who has 1.5 times odd. This guy will most likely pass. The other contestants also have a lot of odds stack on them.

I look up to number 776 too. The contestants who passed from the previous same venue are not divided into the same group because they are sorted separately. He is in the first group. His name is Armand. His odds are 4.2 times. It is weird how his acceptance rate is low despite him winning three matches beautifully, but I quickly understood the reason. Because together with him in the same group is someone with 1.1 odds. Her name is Francesca Stringer. She has a full name, must mean that she is a noble.

"Francesca sama, was it? She is the winner of last year tournament."

The elf captain told us the details. Seems like they have been checking out the tournament from the qualifying for every year.

Francesca Stringer. An affiliate of the Knight Order. The Duchess daughter. She currently has no right to succeed the throne, however she is still the King niece. Last year, she won the tournament when she is still a fifteen-year-old. Ever since she is young, her talents with swords was already showing, and together with Tenbin, they are two people whom are likely to inherit the Sword Saint title.

"She is the most favourite contender for the winner this year. I think she will serve as Sati sama biggest obstacle. She qualifies with a 1.1 odd, and albeit it is a solid bet, I will not buy it because it is not as

fun.”

“Now that you mentioned it, isn’t those kinds of people exempted from qualifying?”

If they are an A rank, or a holder of some track record, they will be exempted from the qualifying matches.

“And yet, why?”

When I asked the receptionist with Sati, I soon figured the reason. Due to her barely able to apply, she was exempted for the first-round qualifier, however she is required to enter the second round qualifying round which happens today.

The winner candidate and Armand. That guy is unlucky to be grouped with her.

“Well, firstly we need to pass the qualifier.”

“You are correct. Sati sama has eight times odd to win too!”

I see you are going to give full support on Sati this year, captain. I shall join you.

After we sent off Sati, I was guided by the elf to an excellent seat at the front row. It is a relaxed box space that is equipped with good chairs and desk.

“We are cooperating with the tournament organiser, hence why we get good seats.”

When it looks like it will rain, the elf will use the water spirit to remove the rain cloud. Occasionally, the participants will misfire their arrow, so the elf command the wind spirit to surround the venue with wind as protection against arrows. These are the tricks that cannot be imitate by an ordinary mage.

Right above our seats are spaces reserved for the nobles. If something happens, they will act as the bodyguards. The elves are quite trusted by the Kingdom government by the look of it.

“I worked in this Kingdom ever since the previous King’s era for one after another. His Majesty the King has been pretty much in love with this tournament since his childhood.”

One after another.....each time, I failed to read an elf true age. Even if she looks young, she must be not less than 100 years old since she is holding captain position.

“If it is King Albrecht, then even I know him. He visited our country around 20 years ago, I think?”

“Correct, Lilia sama. It has been around that long.”

Titus answered.

It was the story about the young prince who has gone for an outing. During that time, he stayed at the Elf Country for almost one month. During that time, the current elf captain act as his bodyguard, and it was that time her friendship with the King deepened.

“My, isn’t that great. Let’s greet him while we are still at the Kingdom’s capital.”

Ellie suddenly said an outrageous thing.

“Stop it.....”

I don’t see any merit to go and greet him now. It will only spell trouble.

“Fumu. If Masaru said so. Originally, I never intended to meet him myself.”

“Once you are granted your aristocracy status, you need to meet him sooner or later anyway, you know?”

“That doesn’t mean that it necessarily means now.”

It is not the matter that I’m becoming a noble.

“However, Masaru sama. Since Francesca sama is here, don’t you think the King will come here as spectator?”

The captain said so. In that case, his seat will be just over there.

It was said that the King is close with his little sister and very much adore the daughter, or his niece, Francesca. That's why, he will come to watch all her matches.

"If that is the case it will be better if we go and greet him."

Regardless of visiting the royal palace, it is rude if we didn't greet him even when we are already nearby.....

Ah, my stomach is churning for some reason.

"Ah, I can see the King. He is quite early today."

Just when I thought people are talking clamorously upstairs, it seems like the King's party has arrived. From the noble seats, I notice a knight is glancing over here, then waved his hand. The captain waves her hand in return. They might be acquainted.

The reason why the King's party arrived quickly are known soon after. It was because of Francesca sama. She is in the first pair from the first group to have the first match for today.

"My stomach hurt. Toilet....."

"I will not let you escape."

I got caught by Ellie.

"【Heal】. This should curb the pain for a while."

My stomach pain disappears after Ann cast her magic.

"Paula, sent the early greeting."

"Yes, Lilia sama."

Following the elf squad captain, Paula san instruction, one of the elves heads to notice the King who is sitting at the noble seat.

"Well, let's go. What, it is just a light greeting."

“The King is a gentle person. There is nothing to worry about.”

“As usual, Masaru just need to nod your head. Also, make sure to lower your head from the beginning, alright?”

“If you seriously dislike it, I don’t mind if you wait here.”

At any rate.....there is no doubt that this must be done. It is too selfish to say that I dislike having to send them my greeting.

I’ll harden my resolve.

“I understand.”

Perhaps, it wouldn’t take that long to finish.

Suddenly, I caught Will watching over here.

“Will, are you coming too? I will introduce all of you together.”

“I’m just your everyday adventurer and I have no particular reason to meet the King. Big bro and others go without me, please.”

I think for a short while, and there is no reason for taking him along unless the fact that he is a prince is known. I can’t afford to take him along.

Only a few steps upward are where the King is seated. The absolute monarch, the supreme authority. I don’t like it. He can order for someone to get behead, and I don’t think the person has any right to object.

Truth to be told, he doesn’t seem to indulge in such an act of lawlessness, and any worries are unwarranted since he is in fact a gentle person, however I certainly should avoid from making him angry.

As expected of the noble seating dedicated for the King. The spaces inside are about five times wider compared to the one provided for the elves, and inside, quite a few people have gathered.

“Oh, Paula! It has been few days, isn’t it?”

“Yes. There are some guests coming from my country. Please let me introduce them.”

First, Liliane sama who is his old acquaintance greeted him.

“And you.....are young lady Liliane?”

“It has been a while, Prince Albrecht.”

“That nickname feels nostalgic. Right, Liliane has not changed at all even after twenty years has passed.”

If he met her around twenty years ago, that means Lilia was ten years old back then. Did she truly not grow that much since then?

“On the other hand, you have grown old.”

This King who simply laughed off Lilia’s rudeness is forty years old. His appearance is that of an ordinary middle-aged man. His clothes are clearly made of great quality, but they are not particularly striking, and he will be indistinguishable if he walks among common man.

“Even so, I aged appropriately as any other human being. So, who are these people at your back?”

“My husband and my family members.”

Since I was nudged repeatedly at my back, I had no choice but to step forward reluctantly and lowered my head. Everyone else proceed to kneel together with me. Lilia is standing still.

“Masaru Yamano. I am an adventurer.”

As for the other elves, since they are not the vassal of the King, they naturally lower their head. In their case, they are not required to get on their knees. However, since we are still considered the subject of this country, we are required to show some respect. It is a bad idea not to bow properly.

“A human being, as well an adventurer. Yamano.....I have never heard of that family name.”

“Fear not for I am just a commoner, your Highness.”

“A commoner and an adventurer, yet you are betrothed to an Elven Princess. What else is it unless than it smells like a romance.”

“Umu. I am the one who requested him to take me as his wife.”

“In that case, you need to tell me more in great details!”

It's too late for me to back down now, and a seat was already prepared for me besides the King.

Didn't you mentioned earlier that this is just going to be a light greeting!

Didn't you said it's fine since all I need to do is to nod!

However, excluding me and Lilia, the others were seated at a different table. I'm sending the most reproachful gaze that I could muster to them. Moreover, there seems to be plenty of time to talk until the game starts.

Or rather, I guess I will be stuck here for the whole day, huh.....?

The distinguished people around the King and my family members greet each other.

Besides the King, sat the King's offspring, the Prince, and the children of the Duchess couple, parent of Francesca. The others are great people like the ministers. Many knights were deployed around us as bodyguards.

Next, Lilia informs him about the recent thing that happen. The king seemed to quite accurately grasped the damage from the battle of the Elf Country, which comes to my surprise at how informed he is regarding the dread of the situation.

And just when Lilia about to reach the part of the story where our love began to bloom, cheers rose in the stadium. Apparently, the game is about to start.

“Qualifier, first group, first match!”

The venue of the match is located directly in front of the noble seats. There are four venues for the matches properly constructed inside the stadium. A stone stage with about 20 centimetres high was newly made above the ground. And the stage is twenty times larger compared to the ring yesterday. It is large enough to evade Mubyōshi-uchi.

The cheers are raised again. Two swordsmen went up to the match.

One of them is a huge, rough man. The little girl is Francesca.

She is equipped with a standard size sword and buckler. Her leather armour also looks ordinary, and she is holding the helmet at her side. She has thin limbs. She is slightly taller than Sati, and her height is about the same as any ordinary girls. Her long black hairs exude gloss and youthfulness. The beautiful girl's green eyes bear a strong will and determination.

There is certainly an air around her. However, she doesn't look that strong. Compared to her, the opponent is a man with a large body like a gorilla, whom weapon is a large two-handed sword. If someone got beaten by such a thing, the cut will show no mercy. Most likely, their bone will crack, and the victim will die on the spot.

Francesca wears her helmet. After she tighten her helmet, she lightly swings her swords once and second times, then she nodded at the referee. Start! The referee gives the signal to begin.

The stage become still like death.

One steps, two steps. Francesca filled the gap. Her opponent falls one step.

What, is he getting overwhelmed? And toward a girl whom weight is half as much, no less.

Francesca suddenly lowered her body and sprung toward her opponent. Fast.

However, there is still some distant to cover. The opponent still has enough room to wield his sword, and he adjusted his sword accordingly to Francesca movement.

A strike. At that moment, as if floating on her feet, she evaded the large sword and dive under the opponent chest with a movement akin of dancing.

Both people interlaced—Francesca makes half a revolution, while her opponent got his knees folded and fell to the ground.

The match was decided in an instant, yet the big guy is nowhere a weakling. The big guy has a decent speed in his swing too. When she jumps in, he decided that his sword would not make it on time, and he changes to a low kick in close range.

However, his kick was evaded, and the blow at his neck ended this match.

Francesca evaded the low kick while inflicting a fatal wound at the same time. Moreover, her movement never lack elegance. Truly, a sixteen years old brimming with gift and talent. No wonder she is nominated to be the next sword saint.

When pit with Sati, I wonder which one is stronger.

Their speed might be equal; however, I will have to prop Sati for power and Stamina. There isn't much power in that physique. Sati is small as well, but her power is boosted by skill and stats.

“I wonder which one is stronger, Sati or her.”

“We will never know unless they fought.”

“Is she that strong?”

Crap. I responded naturally to Lilia while forgetting that the King is here with us.

“Yes. Sati is seriously strong.”

“Oho. When is her turn?”

“The third group second match. I believe it will start soon.”

As the King inquires his servant who is behind him, an immediate

answer come back. The game began at other venues after Francesca match was over. Sati is supposed to be at the third group venue. From here, it is opposite the stadium. I am a bit faraway, so it is hard to see. I didn't use Hawk Eye, though.

Sati is.....over there.

"The small one, yes that is correct. The beastsmen."

I pointed her location to the King with my finger.

"She is really small."

That's why I said she is strong. Well, you will never guess unless you watch Sati's strength beforehand. Her strength is almost 100% all the time, how frustrating.

The previous match ended soon, and Sati's turn came up. Her opponent is a spear user.

Now that you mention it, has she practised with a spear user before?

Isn't this quite bad.....?

Sati looks this way before she climbed up to the stone stage. When our eyes met, she nodded her head. Then, Sati looked up and advance to the match.

The signal to start released. The spear user moves forward little by little menacingly while protruding his spear.

The length of his spear is about 3 meters long. The spear is consisted with a wooden handle and an iron spearhead. The tip is rounded, however a stab from that thing is enough to poke a hole in someone body.

Whether it be a sword or a spear, I don't think the risk of injury is reduced just because one weapon has less blade. A lot of serious injuries were suffered by contestants yesterday too.

Sati makes her move. She quickly closes the distance with the spear user, but she nimbly steps back after the spear user lunge in response

to clear her away. Afterwards, it was the spear user turns to attack. The spear user continuously let out thrusts after thrusts. Although Sati is retreating and keeping good judgement, it's turning into a defensive battle whenever she is trying to get close to the spear user.

But she is nowhere near serious right now. She matches the rhythm of her opponent.....

Sati moved.

She avoided the thrust and step forward without stopping. The spear user swings their spear horizontally to sweep down Sati's leg, however it was stopped by Sati's shield—and she gently prod the opponent knee. The opponent dropped their shoulder.

“What happened?”

“Near the end, she landed a hit at her opponent shoulder.”

Seems like the King didn't see it. I managed to see her movement in fine details thanks to Hawk Eye, but the distance is too far for normal person.

She hit their body from on top of their leather armour, however since they are receiving the attack at such speed, it is unsurprising if they broke some bones and have difficulty to continue the match.

Immediately, the winner is declared, and the opponent received treatment from the shrine member.

“She is quite strong. So, this is how someone with 8 times odd looks like.”

Ah. I forgot to place my bet.....

Chapter 12 ~ Gladiator Competition, Second Round Qualifier ———Invitation———

Sati won her first match successfully, and after that I resumed the conversation that I had with the King. I want to see if there are any contestants who will serve as Sati opponent, but the King is more interested in talking about me and Lilia compared to the other matches.

“So, how far were we when we stop just then?”

“Around the part when I met Masaru after I escaped my country.”

There is an element of dramatization in her story. It is the story used to tell the outsider with various parts that are likely problematic already filtered out. Recently, opportunities like this have increased, so I have more leverage to change the narrative. Still, it doesn't deny how flamboyant our success sounds, but I don't think it is in a degree that sound unnatural for an A rank.

However, I hardly had any chance to talk, so should I really be here?

If my memory serves me right, right now I am supposed to be sitting together with my wives while being encircled by the elves, celebrating in joy towards Sati success on the field, yet why am I here stuck acting as a companion to this old man? Thanks to the bet that I have forgotten to place on Sati earlier, today is a major loss.

For now, it is a relief when I was told that it's unnecessary to act formal since this is an informal place. I was told that I am currently at the same level as Lilia, though.

“Father, it is going to be Francesca honoured sister turns next.”

Our company with the King is interrupted by the young prince remarks. This prince, I wonder if he is around 10 years old. Seems

like he is more concerned about the game than Lilia's story. I too, wish to do so.

Francesca second matches isn't any inferior to her beginning match, instantly defeating her opponent. She exchanges blow directly, *clang* *clang* *kapow*. It ended in three shots. If she continues this way, then she will serve as a powerful opponent in this tournament.

In Sati's venue, the same pair is still fighting since a while ago, interlocked in a death battle. Both suffers a certain amount of damages, but neither of them is willing to step down. Like this, there will be some time before Sati's next turn come.

"The opponent doesn't serve as a challenge at all."

"Her opponent is just that weak."

They shouldn't be that weak since they are participating in this tournament, just the difference in their ability is that high.

Next is number 776 match. It is easy to spot him since he is wearing the same bib as the first qualifying round for the second qualifying round.

"That is the guy. The person Sati lost to during first qualifier."

The winner of this match will compete against Francesca in final, so I continue to pay attention to this game.

Again, his match ended after a couple of exchanges and just like that he proceeds to the final.

In exchange for the loser, Francesca appears on stage and cheers were raised. Seems like this Francesca is quite popular.

"Is her opponent strong this time?"

"He is an unknown fighter who just made his debut, isn't he?"

Even the respected captain is unaware of this person.

“However, this person managed to beat Sati. Let’s assume he is strong.”

“Nothing much can be said because neither of them has demonstrated their true ability so far, hence both has the same chance to win.”

It’s hard to say it out, but I felt like number 776, Armand is stronger. If I were told to fight either of them, I will choose Francesca. That is the choice that I think I could win.

“Honoured sister Francesca will never lose!”

The prince said so, but even I have never expected Sati to lose.

“We will know the result soon, Stephan.”

Right after the King sooth the prince, the signal was released, indicating the start of the match.

However, instead of immediately brandishing his sword, he starts off with talking. I tried to eavesdrop, but the battle has begun before I finished adjusting my Hearing Detection. This skill requires sometimes to get used to.....

The one who makes the first move is Francesca. From her starting point, she immediately rushes into Armand while driving her sword in. Her sword was then swept away, and just like that their faces are interlocked with each other.

Suddenly, Francesca abruptly take a step back.

The cunning Armand lowered his sword and laugh in amusement.

“What happened?”

The King questioned Francesca weird movement.

Simply put, that guy tried to do Mubyōshi-uchi, however Francesca managed to sense it beforehand and took a step back.

“Seems like Armand tries to do something which honoured sister Francesca hated, so she back down at the end.”

This time, Armand hang the tip of his sword below his waist and slowly stride forward, and he stopped. Both swords are now within the range of each other. But Francesca doesn't flinch at all.

Suddenly, Armand sword leaped.

“Aah!?”

It hit, the prince thought and raised his voice in astonishment, however the attack was dodged by a paper-thin difference.

Next is Francesca turns to counterattack. Armand evaded her attack this time as well. They both keep swapping offence and defence, throwing out and receiving the sword, yet both of them never fail to evade each other attack.

However, after several exchanges, Armand sword was stopped by Francesca shield. Armand strategy was to lure her to evade his preliminary attack and then quickly goes for a real attack.

Francesca fall back and again took her distance.

“Both are amazing. My eyes have difficulty to catch up.”

They surely are amazing. There is no way I can execute such evasive movement. But they are still in the level where I can handle them well. Both still haven't show their strength yet. They are trying to measure each other's power level.

Still, her true ability is almost apparent. If this is the ability of the last year tournament champion, then I'd say Sati is strong enough to become a winner too.

“Lilia, observe them carefully. Here they come.”

The air around Armand remain unchanged, however Francesca obviously putting out her fighting spirit to the max. It looks as if she is in fire herself.

Francesca moved. She rushes forward in an instant.

Clang, ding, violent sound from their clashing unheard from before

resounding around the stadium. Although Francesca intensely going for the offensive, Armand counterattacks exactly and has not pulled a step.

To put it bluntly, there is a margin between them before calling them equal. Perhaps, there are difference between their ages and their experience. All Francesca attacks were successfully repelled by Armand.

Despite only launching few attacks, Armand strike managed to scratch Francesca. Of course, Francesca doesn't flinch from that alone, and continues to launch her attack aggressively, however she is a step behind Armand.

Armand has a dexterity corresponding to his age. If not for Francesca ranks as one of the best contestant out there, Armand would has easily win this match.

So, I thought. Yet the flow has changed. Doesn't it look like Francesca is pushing more and more?

Armand movement invoke a sense of eeriness.....here, again. Another strange move set.

Even in situations where it is better to block with a shield, it looks as if he intentionally receives the attack with his sword.....

He never uses his shield that is hanging on his left hand so far. And his opponent, Francesca realizes that.

Is his left hand injured?

But whatever the reason, Francesca doesn't seem to miss it. She mercilessly increases her attacks throughput towards the weak point. I don't think it is cowardice. Even I will do it. Armand is that strong.

Ever since Francesca becomes more aggressive in her attacks, Armand has turn to become defensive. Defeating him is not going to become difficult since one of his hand is unusable. There is a possibility that it is an elaborate trap, but at this rate, she will have a difficulty to win trough ordinary mean.

Finally, Francesca swords manage to cut open Armand shoulder.

Shallow. Even so, Armand get on his knees, then proceed to raise his hand.

Seems like he is giving up. The injury is grievous than it looks.....

“We have a winner!”

Francesca face clearly shows her blatant looks of surprised. She certainly never thinks that she will win the match this way.

They are talking about something again. I adjusted my Hearing Detection.

“Seems like they are looking for something.”

The King said without anyone asking.

“Looks like Armand is getting scolded for intentionally losing the fight. He is asked to fight again properly. But Armand said the match was already decided.”

I could only listen from the middle of their conversation, but perhaps he couldn't use the shield at all. Besides, it is next to impossible to continue the match with the amount of damage he suffered. That's why he gives up in haste.

The referee has come to mediate, but Francesca doesn't look like she was convinced.

“Looks like nobody knows precisely what is happening. Hey, come here both of you.”

“Sir!”

The knights ran off after receiving the order from the King.

So, the two of them come to the presence of the King.

At the same time, Tilika is requested by the King to stand at his rear.

“What are you disputing about?”

“Esteemed uncle! This man, he is holding back!”

“I definitely not trying to hold back or anything.”

“Nonsense!”

“Hmm. Were you Armand? Were you holding back in this game?”

“Of course, I were fighting with all I got, King Albrecht.”

Tilika doesn't respond to his word. Just like I suspected, his left hand is truly injured?

“Then fight me with one hand and give it your all!”

“Without a mistake, I fought with only my right hand and there is no doubt that I'm giving my best. I'm still defeated.”

“As if I would agree! I demand a rematch!”

While saying that, Francesca struck her sword at Armand.

“Even if I fight with my usual style, there is no way I could win. I doubt you are that naïve to not notice that?”

“Grr.....”

Francesca was silenced. If one has his hand sealed as handicap, it's clear to everyone that he couldn't win, even if he gives his best.

“What is your usual style?”

I asked him.

“I am two handed users, Priest boy.”

Two handed users! Not only Mubyōshi-uchi, he is also a two-handed user, which means he is a versatile swordsman.

“A two-handed user.....are you the Empire's Armand Mojica?”

Paula san seems to realize something after hearing he is two handed, then she interrupted the talk.

“I didn’t saw you in the recent tournament, however I still remembered it well.”

“He won the championship in the Empire about a decade ago, didn’t he? I remember it well because it is rare to see someone using two handed swords.”

“The Empire!?”

I heard Francesca was a winner in the Empire’s tournament too. I leaked a surprised voice.

“I never had an intention to ruin other country tournament from the start. For that reason, I am fighting here with a handicap.”

The Empire held tournament is the biggest in this world, and swordsmen who aim to be the strongest are all gathered from all over the world. From the winner point of view, it isn’t weird if he treated the Kingdom tournament as a local competition of some sort. Moreover, he won the championship about 10 years ago. I guess he is about 30 to 35 years old now. The age where he has matured the most.

“However, in any case that I won with a handicap, I thought that would be inevitable, though.”

“Then, why did you compete in this tournament in the first place?”

I asked him what I have in mind. Going as far as putting a handicap on himself, I wonder what propelled him to join this tournament.

“I am scouting. I want to take a direct look at a person that my teacher mentioned. The person who is rumoured to be one of the two candidates to take up the name Sword Saint.”

He registered himself in this tournament after hearing that Francesca is going to participate, but it turned out in the last minute that she is not participating this year. Even if he did manage to confront her, his opponent is a duke daughter. He doesn’t have any connection to the

Kingdom, so any letter that he sends to the premise might be thrown out.

“I was told that if I want to encounter a strong person, then take part in the tournament. I am glad that you came out.”

“Even without going such a roundabout way, you can simply visit from the front with dignified manner.”

“If he proposes to have a match with the daughter of the duke, then wouldn’t he be put inside a prison?”

Even without going that far, it’s easy to imagine how troublesome it would turn out. At any rate, the King love his niece that much.

Well, I wonder how it will turn out if he thrown out such a suspicious letter.

“So? Should I grant this strong man his wishes?”

“She is a genius for her age. My teacher, Barnabas Hayda welcome Francesca Stringer dono to visit us. Of course, only if you are willing.”

Armand told us with a serious voice, which is completely different than his easy-going attitude so far.

Sword Saint, Barnabas Hayda. Sergeant dono master. I feel like I was told by him that he wishes to introduce me.....

Francesca didn’t seem to be fazed to hear that name. Looks like she has predicted it somewhat from the story that she heard so far.

“That is a given. However, before that, Armand Mojica. I want you to fight me with all your might.”

“If you manage to snag an overall victory, then I will serve as your opponent again, with my full power.”

“I have grown stronger in the past year. There is no one in the Kingdom who can serve as my opponent no more.”

“Hopefully it is that simple.”

Armand looked to the venue. It is currently Sati’s second round. Her match is nearly overlooked.

“Oh, it’s Sati’s match. Everyone, lets watch the match first.”

The game soon began.

Sati’s opponent is a huge beastmens swordsman. His arms look powerful and he looks like he got skills.

Sati makes the first move. The other beastmens easily endure Sati’s barrage of attack. Next is his turn to counterattack. His weapon filled with destructive force doesn’t bode well with Sati, and as she retreated, the opponent pursued her. At least he has speed with him.

Sati was soon caught at the end of the stage. The beastmens took the chance and thrust into Sati who is standing still. However, by using the edge at the corner of the stage, Sati passed through the beastmens through his side. Moreover, when she finally passed through, she sweeps down the beastmens leg.

Sati shove her sword toward the beastmens who barely able to turn toward her, and then the beastmens collapse.

The beastmens could no longer stand, so a winner was announced. The healing surgeon rushes over to the beastmens. As expected, nobody is good enough to serve as Sati’s opponent in this qualifying round.

“She added a blow to her opponent foot while she slips through his side. Because of that, her opponent response was delayed for a moment and that opportunity is used by her to launch a stab.”

I explain what is going on to Lilia and the King.

“If she keeps this up then she might be able to enter the final.”

“Her next opponent is a Templar Knight. Last year, he manages to win two battles in the main tournament.”

“I fought him once. He was a troublesome opponent. Whenever he receives damages he will recover himself with Recovery Magic.”

Francesca further explain what the captain has in mind.

His odds are 1.5 times as the most powerful contestant in his group. At first glance, he doesn't look that much different than an ordinary adventurer, but he is equipped with a shield so big his whole body is completely hidden by it. Although at first, he looks like someone who emphasizes defence, the fact that his shield itself hold an immense attack power cannot be ignored.

The shield is also a mass of iron. If anyone got hit on the front, then they might get blown away. And if the user hit someone with the shield's side, it will holds the same offensive power as the sword's blade.

“She will be my opponent, Sati is her name, correct? Must be tough to fight with such a small stature.”

Francesca concluded after the starting signal for the match is released.

I wonder if Sati herself think she doesn't have enough attack power. Certainly, the opponent has a good physique. If he lunges his shield forward, then Sati can make use of whatever the small opening creates to reach his inside. I think it's an unnecessary worry.

Immediately after the signal for the start is released, Sati begin her assault. She went straight ahead to the ridiculously large shield and bend her body downward, allowing her to go through the shield from lower position. Then, a blow.

The opponent drops his shield and protect his knees. Sati aimed her attack there.

The Templar Knight raised his hand with a painful expression and raised his hand, giving up. After a moment of silence, the venue was filled with roar and cheers.

“Ooh?”

Again, Lilia seems to be oblivious to what is happening on the stage.

“Just now, what happening was a feint. She hides behind the shield and hence, disappear from the opponent points of view. She let out her right hand as a feint while her left hand is dealing the blow.”

It's easier to explain, but the secret lies within her Covert and small body stature that are completely hidden behind the shield. It's a kind of blow that can only be released at overwhelming speed. She is lucky to meet all those conditions. It would be unfavourable to her if the Templar Knight was not wearing a metallic armour that they normally equipped.

Sati looks at this side and waves her hands to our notice.

Sati got stopped by the staff at once, but after telling them that she is coming here, I met her at the stairs of the guest seat.

“Well done, Sati.”

“Yes!”

Everyone welcome Sati and praise her. Sati was very happy.

For now, all Sati's matches are over, but it is better if I stayed to observe the other matches. There might be another strong contestant.

“How about lunch with everyone sound?”

Unsurprisingly, the King isn't going to stay here the entire day to watch the match. He instead invited us to the Royal Palace. Well, Lilia is still halfway through her story, too.

Everyone looks at me. Probably they are waiting for me to make the decision. If possible, I would like to refuse the King's invitation, however that would require me to find an excuse that wouldn't garner any attention my way.....

“Esteemed uncle, you may have the entire day free, however we have an upcoming match to look up into. We don't have time to play.”

Perhaps she guessed that I am lost for word, so she opted to lend me

a hand.

“Mu, you are right. I don’t mean to force you or anything.....”

“Since I am staying here with Sati, would you mind going in my stead, Lilia?”

They are just going to listen about the story, hence my presence is unneeded.

“That will do.”

Ellie and Ann accompanied her to the Royal Palace.

Tilika remained here and together, we watched the King departed.

“By the way, we were told to go to the office.”

They were asked to return the number bib. Besides that, the committee is interested to hold an interview with the contestant who manage to enter the main competition.

“That’s why Sati, I say why don’t we return them together.”

Francesca hasn’t done it before, and because of that she is reluctant to return them all on her own.

“Ah, sure.”

“I’m going too.”

“Me too.”

Both me and Tilika are outsiders, but nobody is stopping us when we entered the hall alongside Francesca. Perhaps it was thanks to her prestige and charisma.

Sati intermittently sneak a peek at Francesca while we are walking.

Is she worried about her due to her being one of potential rival?

“Is there anything on my face?”

“Ah, um. Francesca sama is a princess, isn’t it?”

“My mother was a princess, but when she married father, she abandoned her title due to the confusion for the right to succeed the throne. That’s why I cannot say that I am a princess.”

Sati quietly hear her explanation. But I couldn’t help not to get a little disappointed.

“When we finally meet at the main match, feel free not to hold back just because I am the King niece, understood? I won the championship last year, but until then I was beaten many times. Going easy on me is useless.”

“Understood, Francesca sama.”

Sati never go easy on battle, so I guess she is just purely interested on her being a princess. If Sati wishes, I am sure there will be another chance to visit the royal palace while we are still staying here in the Kingdom’s capital. Even today we were invited to a luncheon.

Without speaking anything, she quietly follows Francesca who went to the office that is located under the stadium auditorium without any delay.

“Well then, Sati. I am looking forward to fight you in the main competition.”

Francesca returns her number to the person working inside the office, and after saying so, she exchanged a word or two, then she left off quickly.

“Number 777, Sati isn’t it? Congratulations for making it to the main competition. I’d like to hear various stories from you.....”

And they look at me, with a facial expression as if asking who this guy should be?

“Please don’t mind me. I am Sati’s husband.”

“My sister.”

“Ooh.”

For the time being, I was asked about my name, place of birth, career and so on.

However, there isn't much additional comments that I can talk about. I can use magic, and I don't want to tell them about how it is only about half a year since I first learn how to swing a sword.

“You have never participated in this tournament before. Your most remarkable achievement is a dragon suppression. What were you doing before that?”

“Umm that.”

“She helped around her house at the rural village. Then, she came to the town to become an adventurer. There is when she learns swordsmanship.”

Sati seems reluctant to answer, so I answer in her stead. I don't bother to tell that she was sold as a slave.

“Please tell us what your motivation is, like going to final, etc.”

“I am aiming for the overall championship.”

“Alright, that was the last question. Thank you. The pairing will be displayed on the morning the day after tomorrow, so please come to the venue as early as possible.”

When we returned to the seat prepared by the elf, there are only a couple of elves left. Most of them have followed Lilia. Will and Armand are already in a good term.

“Welcome back, big bro. And congratulations for your advancement, Sati san.”

“Thank you very much, Will san.”

Despite there being an ample room of space, I didn't bother to sit further away than those two. After I sit nearby, I heard Armand

trying to start a conversation with me.

“I have been waiting. There is a little something that I want to talk about.”

“I don’t mind that at all, but did you see if there is anyone else that is strong enough for the rest of the matches while we were away?”

“So far, I couldn’t find anyone who is outstanding.”

Just like I guessed, there isn’t anyone who is stronger than Francesca who won the championship last year.

“That’s right. I would like to see this girl skills once again.”

Armand easily swift the topic to Sati.

Introduction to swordsmanship can be done via Sergeant dono, hence there is little to no point about this skill test. But, it will serve as a good opportunity to see whether Sati can cope with Mubyōshi-uchi or not, plus he can serve as a good training partner before the real match start.

With that said, it was decided that we will meet again after the qualifying is over at the Elf Mansion.

“Armand is the Sword Saint disciple, isn’t he?”

While we are watching the rest of the matches, I decided to voice out things that have been on my mind.

“That is correct.”

“Is the training with the Sword Saint as gruesome as I’ve heard?”

“He is a demon. I was prepared to die for many times.”

Ah, that is to be expected.....

“Since my teacher is already in his late year, he rarely does direct guiding.”

Why are you scouting in the first place? Despite having many

disciples, it was said that the Sword Saint was unable to find a person with enough qualities that can convinced him. A person worthy to succeed the title of new Sword Saint. That is after he considered Armand, and countless other talented disciples.

“He is a monster. Hence, the reason why he is called the Sword Saint. There is no swordsman who is good enough to replace him in the past decade that has appeared yet.”

The strongest swordsman in the world who is also called as monster by Armand.

“Well, it’s hard to get master to join the practice without talking about his successor.”

Sati who wants to begin asking questions look this way. I guess she wants to go.

“Don’t mind me. Sati may go.”

“Masaru sama come and practice with us too.”

“But I am not trying to become a swordsman.”

“Priest boy, if you still remember your skills, then why don’t we have a little test?”

“I am fine.”

“Masaru sama must be together with us! Let’s become stronger together!”

“No, he wouldn’t take a disciple that easily, you know?”

“Armand san please be quite for a while.”

“Ah, sure.”

“When it was time to practice with Sergeant dono, he would put a rope on Masaru sama neck and then Masaru sama join us.”

It’s rare to see Sati so stubborn. Perhaps this is one of the outcome

from Sergeant dono education. Naturally, I wish I can grow stronger like she said.

“I-is that still a no.....?”

I despise it, but it certainly better if I practice. Sati looks like she is going to cry any moment, plus I already promise Sergeant dono that I am going to visit the sword sanctuary Viels.....

“Understood. Let’s visit that place together.”

Perhaps, the training wouldn’t be that harsh. Plus, there is nothing left that I can teach Sati anyways.

“Yes, let’s work hard together!”

Well, as long Sati is pleased, I guess everything is alright? No matter how intense the training is, there is low probability people are dying. I’ll just need to brace myself.

“Are you done discussing?”

“Ah, sorry.”

“Fufufu. Well then, if you want to have the first taste of master’s training menu, let’s start by defeating me first!”

This person is very energetic.

“The priest boy seems like he is going to train too, so I wish to see your skills.”

“Masaru sama is stronger than me!”

“Ohoho.”

“Sati san is a bit stronger with sword, however big bro commands legion of magic.”

“That is if you don’t mind me releasing my magic 100 meters from your location~”

“By the way, how great are you in using magic.....?”

“I am an A rank mage. I can go as far as terrain changing magic.”

“Masaru sama magic is truly spectacular!”

‘So, your sword skill is inferior to the little lady?’

“Masaru sama is not as good with sword as me!”

“That is.....is it okay with you to show me your serious sword skills?”

“Well, if casually.....it’s fine.”

“Do you seriously wish to see the Sword Saint together with this passionate young lady when you yourself are that disinterested?”

“Well, to tell you frankly, someone else already arrange our meeting beforehand, so.”

“No, it isn’t that simple a matter to introduce people.....”

Armand cast his suspicion on my words, however I don’t think Sergeant dono will say something that he doesn’t mean.

“I was referred by a guild instructor name Vault.”

“Vault.....I have never met him, but I’ve heard of his name. I see. So, he is an instructor in the Kingdom’s capital.”

“He is currently staying at the capital. I think you can meet him if we visit the Adventurer Guild together.”

“Yeah. I am fine with that.”

I see. He has no qualms about that. That’s quite disappointing.

Sergeant dono was fighting for the strongest swordsman in the world spot a generation behind Armand. If only he isn’t injured, then I am sure he will still become the hot topic among swordsman even until now.

“The Demon Grueling Training. I hope you will accept the full course.”

Armand has a look of absolute delight.

“Was the training that harsh?”

“Don’t worry. A lot of people was traumatized by master’s teaching menu, however none of them left while dying.....probably.”

Probably, huh.

Chapter 13 ~ Gladiator Competition, Second Round Qualifier —Attempt—

There is nothing much to watch during qualifier.

The truly strong one was not required to win in qualifier, so all of them are exempted from this round. That ensure the odds for the strong one to be paired together lower and with that lesser chance that they are going to defeat each other. Thus, there isn't much spectacular matches ongoing for this round.

Though, the fight between mid-rank people with about equal ability might stirred up more excitement for flesh and blood. This tournament was probably aimed to gather the average level fighter, so they can make name for themselves.

As I expected, Sati is by far a lot stronger. Although there seems to be several exceptional people who look strong, so far, the only person who might pose as her rival might be Francesca alone.

The other never came back, and just when I was getting bored, Sati pointed out to the venue.

“Masaru sama, it's Lazard san.”

I was wondering where the heck is he supposed to hide nearby here while waiting for the qualifier to end. Turns out there is a place which resemble a waiting room.

“Your acquaintance?”

“I was requested by him to, ah”

While I was answering Armand, his opponent on stage got blown away. The memory during the time I was blown away the same way resurface vividly. That leaves an displeasing feeling.

Fortunately, the injury is not life threatening. He received medical treatment and is now recovered to safety. I wonder if Lazard is going easy against his opponent.

He is a power type, but he also has good skills. A typical adventurer would usually use two hands to handle the same sword, however he can easily swing them with a single hand. He can even execute a lesser technique. I wonder if his natural detection instinct is high.

He is the ideal type for a swordsman. His muscles are well-trained, and he is blessed with a good physique. He is extremely skillful, combined together with that is his abundance of experiences. He also happened to possess a braveness and determination to charge on a dragon head on.

Lazard san safely win his second and third matches. And he won all the matches while he is still hiding his true ability.

“Sati.....do your best.”

“Yes!”

If we are aiming for the championship, the chances that Sati is going to face Lazard san is by no way low.

At my current state, I don't think I cannot win against him. Still, a scary thing will always remain scary. I'm glad that I didn't participate in this tournament.

After Lazard san matches were over, all the other matches went on like usual, and only after the number of contestants and the audiences has thin out, the others finally came back.

Surprisingly, Ann looks like she was drunk.

“That's because they serve a delicious alcohol—. I got a bottle as souvenir on Masaru's behalf—”

So, she said, and she showed me the alcohol. My stance still wouldn't budge though, so no matter how good the alcohol they serve in the royal palace, it's still a no thank you. The others seem to enjoy their

stay, so I'm satisfied with that.

Alongside that, she also brings a takeout for me. I laid them all on the table, then I repeatedly asked them for the latest development.

Although Lilia's story keeps on going, it can be concluded that their visit to the royal palace ended without any problem. The served food and drinks were delicious, and they were even permitted to tour around the royal palace. Ellie told the King about our village development, and by the look of it, the King himself promised to visit us once our village is on the track.

"It's still too early for that kind of talk, but like this when the time comes everything will progress smoothly, no?"

The approval of our territory and the arrangement for a formal visit are supposedly done through Earl Park acting as the intermediary. But now that we have requested directly, there is no need for the Earl anymore, as we already established a direct connection with the King.

Previously, we planned to ask for help via the Elf, but if we continue that way, I feel like we are going to land in a troubling position, once I've become more important. I don't think I'm close to be an important person soon. Compared from asking the Elf royal family for help, it would be safer to contact the King directly. Or so I believe.

We are currently in a peculiar position, so right now it's impossible to judge what kind of choices are the correct one.

But at the very least, compared from making a reservation with the Earl, there is no mistake that getting into the King good side is much better.

Either way, this is something that will happen several years later. When the time comes, the situation would have progress further.

For now, as long Ellie is satisfied, I have no objection toward this matter. Everything is progressing smoothly within my expectation, hence if my wives are happy, so am I.

Now that all the matches for the qualifying round has ended, everyone returns to the Elf Mansion. Just like we arranged, Sati and Armand is going to have a duel.

Same requirement applies. Armand equipped the same shield that he has for qualifier. It's his style to go easy with his opponent.

Within the training ground inside the Elf Mansion, both are facing each other while the elves serve as spectators. Sati is quite enthusiastic to have her revenge. She can be very competitive.

“Begin!”

After hearing my starting cue, Sati advances forward, first step, second steps, third steps, and she finally stop. Her starting position was far away, but now she is perfectly inside the Mubyōshi-uchi range.

“How nice. Now that's what I called a swordsman.”

He said, and on the same time, he moved——clang. Sati completely stopped Armand's sword.

Both ceased their movement at once.

Even after I witnessed it again, I noticed that there isn't any difference between his and Sergeant dono Mubyōshi-uchi. In that case, I should be able to block it too.

Armand smile in delight and resumed his attack.

Sati's dodged his attack at a hair breadth. Then she launches a counterattack. Armand dodges all of them too. It seems like they are going to recreate the same battle as previously with Armand and Francesca.

The difference is, Francesca has a little oomph in her movement, whereas Sati utilizes a lot of sidestep and back step.

Was it due to the gap in their experience? In order to stop the opponent from dodging at that distance, one must be able to anticipate their movement. Sati has insufficient experience in one to

one fighting.

Sati sidestep once again. This time she utilizes her step work without any reservation.

As for ability.....I think she hold a bit of an upper hand against Armand? No, his left hand is unusable, so his ability is still unknown.

Since it's practice, there is no point to win through aiming for his weak point. It's a brilliant fight, so it matters not even if she loses here.

Sati, however, is aggressively on offence. She skilfully uses her footwork and repeating a hit and retreat. Although she frequently attacks Armand, she is obviously inferior.

But the conclusion to this fight arrived before long. Sati didn't miss the vulnerable part where Armand couldn't handle Sati continuous attack, and where his stance waver, she added more blow and this session ended.

She just happens to attack that part by chance and it's not like she purposely targeting his weak point, so it can't be helped. Sati just don't have the luxury to not do it.

"Good work, Sati. Armand san, are you hurt?"

"I'm fine. She stopped right before she hit me."

"Is Sati's judgement correct?"

"I too believe that it's over."

And that marks the end of today's event. I thought it was time for me to wash my sweat at the bath and eat dinner, but somehow, I was nominated next.

"I don't need this test or anything."

"Now, now, please don't say that. I'm sure these ladies want to witness how well their husband fare in a fight too, am I right?"

He received no reply, but Sati looks like she's looking forward to it.

For the love of God, I would love to decline him, but fleeing at this stage would seem unmanly.

"Come on, the girls look like they are looking forward to it."

"Oh well."

I'll not pretend that I don't know his weak point, thus no gentlemanly act from me. I'll most probably win. So, I thought, but after I equipped my leather armour and confronted him, I realized that Armand is now holding two swords. Is he serious.

"Even if I said that I'm not top form, to think that I'm defeated not only once, but twice in the same day. I think I better start showing my strong suit now."

Indeed.

But as far as I can see during qualifier, he never does something that'll meaninglessly damage his opponent.

"For once, please take this seriously and give me your best, okay!?"

I will keep that in my mind.

"I know. This will serve as a test to my ability."

"Masaru, he's serious."

That being the case, he'll serve as a suitable opponent, so I thought when Tilika drive the nail in. My motivation flies out from my face.

".....understood, I'll be serious. Can I use magic?"

"Definitely not."

Not possible, huh. Well, it can't be helped. I just have to give it my best.

His power is probably on league with Sergeant dono. The only way to proceed is to come to him with killing intent. No, first, I need to

intercept his Mubyōshi-uchi.

“Fair warning. It’s harder to block this technique with dual sword.”

He said before we start the match.

Eh, what was that? Why I’ve never heard of it.

Immediately, I tried to create a distance between us, and Armand make his move.

Two swords approach from left and right. the sword movement comes in completely different timings——

“Impossible to block of them.”

I block one with my shield and managed to block another one with my sword.

Oh crap. I really should just have to receive the blow just now.

No, I promised Tilika that I’m going to fight him seriously. Let’s face him in earnestness.

“You can finish me if you pursuit your attack.”

“But then, I cannot witness your true power.”

Then, he pulled back his sword from our deadlock and I use this opportunity to create a distance. The problem is how to proceed from here on. Naturally, I don’t know any effective countermeasure against him since I’ve never fought against a dual wielder before.

Armand doesn’t make a move. Maybe he is waiting for me to make my move this time around.

There is no use thinking too hard about it. I can only believe on my own experience that I’ve accumulated so far and my skill set.

The person in front of me is an Orc. A rare Orc with dual wielding skill. Unless I defeat it, I’d die. Good, I’ll just proceed with this setting.

Any lesser technique is useless. I'm sure my status well exceeded him, too.

I aggressively step right in front of his space to commence my assault. I released a strike from downward with full speed and all my might. I let loose a slash that will absolutely send Armand to death if hit.

He evaded it. Still within my expectation. Now, I'm going to intrude inside his space further—woah that's dangerous!? The sword in his left hand is leaping towards me as if it's a creature with its own mind, warding me off. Coincidentally, his right sword is coming and is being blocked by my shield, but I've yet formulated how to block the sword in his left hand—oh shit oh shit. Nothing at my rear, now to turn around—

Frantically, I ended up rolling on the ground unsightly trying to dodge his attack. Armand wait for me to stand on my two feet.

My breath turns ragged. Cold sweat run through my face.

C-close, I might go down without realizing anything.

What should I do?no, there is nothing. Too much difference between our ability.

Keep on struggling without giving up, and a miracle might cast itself on you.

Sergeant dono words rang in my head. I gathered my resolve. I will not let it die.

I step forward. I dodged. Again, an attack from his dual swords. Now that I have calm down—here.

I let my mana flows. My magic is just a feint.

I don't plan to use it. But if he can sense a mana flow, then this isn't something that he will ignore—

As a result, my sword clashed with one of Armand's sword, and another one of his sword went straight to my neck. Too bad. Yamano Masaru has died!

"You are quite a scary fellow."

Even if I really did use a magic, it would be nowhere enough to cut through this bone and flesh. Armand sword will cut through my neck, while in some chance if my magic hit him, it's not enough to leave fatal wound.

"Armand san too."

"Just now, why didn't you release the magic?"

"I'll receive a fatal injury, meanwhile Armand san will just be hindered temporarily from acting."

Perhaps, if I launched a Fire Magic at that time, the result might have ended up as mutual defeat. Sadly, the magic that I tried to conjure just now was an Air Hammer.

"What if you use magic from the beginning?"

If there is enough distance available, I'm confident enough to even take down someone like Sergeant dono. I'll have an upper hand with Transition Sword and Summoning Magic.

"I'll win."

"Let's have a rematch. This time, use your magic."

I don't think I will lose if this is a no hold barred fight, but if it's just a duel.....simply trying to win is complicated.

"Let's stop it here. Unlike when fighting an opponent with a sword, my magic is too strong to be used on another person."

For a strong opponent like him, I need to finish everything with a single strike.

"More importantly, please have another match with Sati, this time

while duel wielding.”

It’s seldom to have a chance to fight with a person with a higher rank. This will serve as a good experience for Sati.

“Huh. So, you already meet that man.”

“Both him and the little girl.”

“Do you find them both fascinating?”

“I’m sure master will be more pleased to meet the little girl.”

Possessing that degree of swordsmanship at such a young age. Her body is still small too, so we can expect much bigger growth.

“You might be right. Sati, well, it’s just been somewhere around half a year since she started practicing sword.”

“Half a year!? If that’s true, then you must have trained her carefully, Vaulk dono.”

“I only give her a minimum guidance. Sati become stronger through her own mean.”

After listening to the details, it seems that she began to learn how to swing a sword, also learn how to hold a bow when she first arrived at the Adventurer Guild.

While she was working together with Masaru and other adventurers, in just one, or two months, it was said that no one in the guild branch can take her on anymore.

“So, she can even handle a bow.”

“Looking at how well she is performing with them nowadays, I’d say her proficiency with a bow is no less than with a sword.”

Looking at them carefully, I see there are almost no difference between Sati and Francesca. But it can be said that Francesca has been gripping her sword for 3 times far longer. Ever since she started, it's been nothing short for ten years since she has devoted her life to sword. But, the other girl only has half a year. Her adventurer rank already reaches a B rank. Did her well-tempered ability comes from an actual combat?

“But Masaru surely is one interesting character.”

“But isn't his motivation kind of lacking?”

“Umu. Besides, his tremendous magic arsenal is a great deal towards his fighting ability. He always doing thing in his own way. Plus, he was always absent for a long time from our guild, hence I couldn't force him to attend practice.”

Despite being a wizard, his swords skills are truly extraordinary. Sadly, his lack of motivation has rendered them useless. If only he is a little younger, alas, I couldn't expect much physical growth from a 23 years old man. I wonder how much time he has left to grow as a swordsman.

“Masaru arrived at our guild seven months ago.”

“Don't tell me Masaru never held a sword before, too?”

“He was capable of using a sword and basic magic right from the beginning, somewhat. However, during his first day on a hunt, he lost to Wild Rabbit and immediately return to the town.”

“That.....”

The Wild Rabbit is ferocious, but even a child can win against them if they're holding a weapon. And it's only been seven months since then? It's not as surprising compared to Sati who has only began wielding a sword for half a year, still his growth rate is extraordinary indeed.

“The problem here is Masaru's lacks of to no motivation. Sati has been practicing whenever she has a free time, however Masaru dislike to put in an effort. Of course, as an adventurer, he did have a

drive to grow stronger. It's only for a short period of time, but I did give him a special training. But usually, he never put a serious effort in his practice. And yet, look at his growth rate. I just can't understand him."

"Then, his growth rate is as exceptional as the little girl?"

"Even his magic is growing tremendously. Remember when I told you how he only possesses a fighting prowess that's not even enough to take down the Wild Rabbit? And right now, did you hear how strong his magic has become?"

"Magic that's strong enough to change the terrain, right?"

He boasted how he can defeat me if he combines both his swords skill and magic together. He wasn't bluffing.



“Sati will grow even stronger. If she managed to grow safely to adulthood, I’m sure she will make herself a name as one of the great swordsmen.”

“No doubt about that.”

I know a lot of people who has about same ability like her. However, I’ve never seen one at such a young age.

“But Masaru will be more than that. He will become an adventurer who will mark his name in history.”

By the way, his party is consisted of swordsmen, mages and a Spirit Magic user. Moreover, a priest and a Truth Official. This is as if——

“Like the Hero of legend?”

The legendary hero was a magic swordsman too.

“I will not be surprised if Masaru raises his power and become a hero someday.”

Interesting. My master will surely love to hear this story.

Chapter 14 ~ Entry to Battle

“Today is a free time.”

My family members gathered together inside the living room at Elf mansion. We are discussing today's schedule.

Today marks the end of Gladiator Competition qualifier round. It is a rest day given before the main tournament start.

Our agendas in this Kingdom are not all fulfilled yet. We are finally given a chance to take a break, so if I don't actively use it, I'd feel like my everyday life in this another world will be spiralling down.

To be honest, I want to rest for the entire day today, but I think maybe Sati wants to train.

“What do you planned to do, Sati? Either taking a day off or go for a practice, I'm fine both way.”

“I want to continue practicing for a while.”

Yesterday, she was severely beaten by Armand with his dual swords. I am sure she wants to review those technique diligently while her memory is clear.

“Then I'll keep you company this morning. Let's go have fun later in afternoon.”

I'll be troubled if today's activity ending up interfering for tomorrow's match.

“By the way tell Tamara that I said thanks.”

So, Ellie told me.

She is one of three slaves that I recently purchased, Tamara the married woman.

Turns out, she already has a man in her heart even before I

purchased her. It feels like a waste, but I still help them be reunited.

As for that newlywed, we brought them here husband and wife to Kingdom's capital for their honeymoon. Of course, it's a gift from me, and I would like to observe whether the protection will apply on her.....simply an experiment, putting it the other way.

As for the man-hating Lufutona chan, I heard that she fell sick because she was surrounded by too many people. She's gone back to the village earlier and right now she's staying at home with a group of elves.

"Seems like there are a lot of thing to enjoy out there. We can go for a sightseeing after this."

I guess they can enjoy the Kingdom's capital without getting interfered with anything. I know that I'm the one who planned it, but how very enviable.

I was planning to go sightseeing today, but now I wonder if it's worth to be in hurry. I can always come to the kingdom's capital anytime I want. I don't want to bother going out for sightseeing especially now when capital is congested due to festival period.

I was really looking forward to the festival, but I don't feel like I was having fun with the events that has transpired for the past few days.

So, I concluded that I don't want to enjoy the festival on my own. I want to enjoy having fun in the festival with everyone.

I wonder if we can slowly enjoy the second half of this festival?

There is still a little something regarding the relationship between Sati and the King when it comes to participating in this competition, but it's not something that is much concern to me. It will not come as a surprise if Sati managed to win the overall championship. Since the King was already satisfied with yesterday event, I doubt he will meddle in the future.

Let's think about it optimistically.

For now, there is no contact with God. As busy as we are right now,

there is nothing that will become a danger to our life.

Surely, with this event the connection between Sati and the King will strengthen in positive way.

When I think about it that way, the series of events happening after we decided on Sati's participation in the competition might not be that bad either.

So now, what should we do in the afternoon?

Maybe we should look for a bookstore. Since we are in the Kingdom's capital, I'm sure there is a large bookstore around. After that, we will look for an adequate food stall and purchase our foods. Regardless of the festivals or sightseeing, I'd like to have a normal date. When we're tired, we will go home——while everyone is talking endlessly with each other, we were told by the elf that there is a visitor.

“A guest arrives to meet Masaru sama. They are from the Gladiator Competition administrative office.”

“Me? Not Sati?”

“Yes. Their business here is strictly with Masaru sama only.”

I wonder what it is. Was it because I conceal myself while acting as a priest during the first day qualifier? But even back then, my role is to simply administer general medical treatment.

“So umm, don't tell me these people are angry?”

“There seems to be a request for you.”

If they're approaching me as an adventurer, then wouldn't it be more appropriate for the guild to do so? As expected, this must have something to do with medical treatment.

Are they recruiting me for a job in anticipation of my power?

Yeah. As expected, they are here to talk about general medical treatment stuff, perhaps. And that kind of talk is.....no, there is still the matter regarding masked priest.....so this talk must be about

something different. But if that's the case, then this matter should fall under the temple jurisdiction and no longer be something under the Gladiator Competition administrative office.

I failed to understand no matter how much I'd think. Maybe I should go ask whether they truly are angry or not.

But I'll make sure that everyone comes along. I'm anxious. I have a bad feeling.

Two men are waiting inside the guest room. One of them has a well-defined body and I can sense how his mana doesn't fall short. He is around 30 years old. He is wearing some good-looking clothes, maybe he is a noble. He looks quite skillful, and he give off a feeling that he requires no escorts and no problem to come unarmed.

"Mr. Yamano Masaru. Congratulations. We have recognized your admission in the Gladiator Competition."

"Huh?"

The frail looking middle aged man said so. Maybe this is the person responsible for administration task.

"Masaru, since when did you applied?"

So, Ellie asked, but naturally even I don't remember when I applied for an admission.

"I've never applied."

"That's all. I'll look forward to see your participation in the Gladiator Competition main battle tomorrow....."

"If I really want to participate then I would've registered myself from the beginning. Plus, what spurred this decision anyway?"

This must be either Armand or Sergeant dono doing, or it might be a suggestion from the King himself.

"Leave the explanation to me."

Finally, the other person opened his mouth.

“Hmph.”

“It is for the sole reason of avenging my nephew whom his enemy is Masaru dono. My name is Gustav Byron. I am George’s uncle.”

“George.....?”

Who the hell is that? Even if he said that I’m his nephew enemy, I have no clue who that person is whatsoever.

“Wait a moment. Do you still not understand even after I tell you the name?”

“No.....my bad.”

“Masaru, Masaru.”

Tilika tug my cloth from behind to get my attention.

“A candidate for my husband, you dueled him with Golem.”

“O, oh—!”

That guy.

“Hey, might it be.....that your nephew died or something?”

Don’t tell me the wound from that time, but there’s no way, right?

“He is extremely healthy.”

“Then why you tell me that you are here for vengeance?”

“Thanks to you, George completely destroyed his chance for a marriage. He is completely depressed right now.”

He reaps what he sows.

“George saw you at the competition assembly hall. So, he clings to me and ask me to deliver you a swift punishment.”

“How dare he pushed his fight to his own family to settle!”

Lilia immediately reacted to Gustav words.

“Please wait, Elf dono. I have already warned him not to do something like that. I wish to not cause more problem anymore.”

People has been complaining about that case to Adventurer Guild and Truth Official. If he caused a problem again, this time, not only George will be held accountable, it might develop into something where the Byron family need to take responsibility.

I don't know how Adventurer Guild is going to react but turning the Truth Official into your enemy is frightening indeed.

“So, what about the Gladiator Competition?”

“To put it simply, I registered for you so that we can have a duel. We are going to meet on stage during Gladiator Competition.”

“That's not what I mean. Plus, there is no way we will be conveniently paired, right?”

There is no problem regarding that matter, the management guy said so. He explained how Gustav family possess an exemption for a reserve match as preliminary round before entering the main battle. He said only the winner will advance to main battle.

Although it's a slightly irregular occurrence, the match will be held before the pairing is made, so there is no problem.

“Even on our side, we couldn't afford to withdraw.” —*Japanese idiom*——

George is the youngest child in Byron family. He is considerably talented, and because of that, he is loved by both his parent and grandparent.

Well, this George kun. Due to the disturbance in his engagement with Tilika, he's been injecting a lot of ideas into his household. Something like I've taken a coward measure to defeat George, or somehow or another I managed to snatch Tilika away from him.

Then, an assault plan was derived at Byron family residence in the Kingdom's capital. And Gustav was pointed as the responsible person who's going to execute that plan.

Gustav is not a member of a main family, he is from branch family. The main family head is currently absent from Kingdom's capital. Even if they managed to contact him, he will not make a move soon.

"That's why, with this Gladiator Competition, hopefully things will be solve peacefully."

"You mean, a public execution during the match?"

He nodded after I made a little deliberation.

"It's no use to keep up an appearance in front of the Truth Palace, but we are still talking about you taking a beat in front of a large crowd. Of course, I will hand you some "flower" for your effort. You are an A rank with enough skill to beat George in one hit, don't you? Let's fight fair and square, prove your ability to everyone and make them satisfied."

Hmm? I cannot overlook what he said just now. Did he just assumed that I'm going to lose?

So, George arbitrarily planned an attack and to prevent that, this guy drags me out into the stadium and is going to beat me up?

It's enough even if I lose unsightly. If I've shown myself to be strong enough to fight back, George lies will easily be disproved.

"Naturally, you will not do it for free. If you accept this duel, I'll pay 100 gold coins as request fee."

100 gold coins here is equivalent to 10 million yen. The payment probably includes for my trouble and a hush money. I wonder if the amount is a lot because it's an abnormal request fee.

"That's quite a selfish decision."

"You only need to accept the duel. Isn't it simple?"

Maybe the thought never crosses his mind that, there is no way me, who has an occupation of an adventurer, will be reluctant to participate in this tournament.

If I get injured, I can easily heal myself with Recovery Magic. Moreover, he'll also pay 100 gold coins and I can get him to promise to go easy during battle. It's certainly is a simple request.

"I'm warning you, as a Truth Official."

Tilika interrupted us seeing that I'm speechless for an answer.

"To begin with you, the Truth Official, weren't you introduced to us as lady Tilika, the sweetheart during your betrothal, right from the start? I don't want to hear you discussing about this case as a Truth Official."

"To be exact, a fiancée candidate. I don't remember ever agreeing."

"That's a matter of the other side. Here, you were introduced to us as the fiancée, that's what happened. I admit there is a problem with how George was dealing with things, but the shame from failing to do this will fall onto mine."

Well, from George's own perspective, it's one side of the truth when he lost the battle and got his fiancée stolen. I partially understand, and partially don't.

"I think this matter is already too late to be closed during that time when George was defeated. George already convinced everyone in his family, and this matter already reached the upper branch of Truth Palace. Right now, this is a problem between you and George, but once this matter escalated, you will be officially recognized as the enemy of Byron family. I'd say that's a bad outcome. Duel me. And this problem will be solved."

He promised them to get a duel with me and that's the reason for his visit today. If Gustav returned back home downhearted, he'll have his pride crushed while George and the rest of his family will have their doubts remains.

"Masaru sama is a guest in our mansion. Will Byron family turn the

elves into their enemy?”

After hearing Paula san words, Gustav was left with a puzzled expression.

“As someone of Byron family, I failed to see any relation between us and the elf at all.....”

“Even when this matter is being discussed inside the Elf Mansion?”

“That’s why, I’m offering this lad here for a fair and square duel.”

Ah, for once, I’m glad to be staying inside the Elf Mansion. I wonder what would’ve happened if I were staying inside a cheap hotel.

“I dare you to lay a single finger on Masaru. The elf will never forgive you.”

Lilia said while glaring at Gustav.

“The elf will make an official objection to Byron family.”

Paula san said in response to Lilia’s threat.

“Going that far for this matter is kind of.....”

“When someone laid their hand on our guests, that is an appropriate reaction.”

For some reason, the elves are reacting excessively, and this matter is developing into larger problem. This is kinda bad. If I accept his duel, will thing resolve more peacefully?

“If it’s a duel that you seek, how about we do it elsewhere?”

For now, I need an alternate plan. I’m fine with a duel, I just don’t want to enter the tournament.

“That’s possible if we can get everyone agreements, but how do I put it.....accidents may occur.”

Accidents. In other words, if we have a private duel, the Byron family might come up with something? I don’t think it’s possible considering

we are under the Truth Palace watch.....no, it's still not too late. Even if that's not the case, since we're fighting on an informal stage, if either one of us dies or becomes inconvenient due to an accident during the duel.....like that, it's much safer to fight under a large audiences and tournament rules.

Besides, we're required to use a weapon allowed by the tournament only, so it's more of a proper fight. A sword with blade, as opposed to that time with George?

"Do you hate to lose under the public presence?"

I'm more afraid of the public more than losing.

"I don't think I'll lose."

"If so, fight me fair and square. Win against me."

I can't tell him that I'm afraid of large crowd now. I'll be treated as a fool.

"Masaru, that's enough. I don't know how old their family's history is, but if they're looking for a fight, we just have to thoroughly crush them."

"What're the elves planning to do!?"

"Are you aware that we're in a close acquaintance with the king? I'm sure the king is interested to hear this story."

"I wonder what will happen, if George's exploits happen to spread further?"

He's bombarded with questions from Paula san and Ellie.

"In the future, Byron family will no longer.....won't you retract the duel now?"

"Interesting. If you're going to do it, then allow me to accompany you to the end!"

Ah, jeez. Everything is settled if I agree to enter the tournament.

“Yes, yes. Enough, both of you.”

I clapped my hands to draw their attention.

“This matter is my own personal problem and in no way they are related to the elves. Don’t you think so?”

“That’s right.”

After hearing my exclamation, Gustav gave off a relieved look.

“Let’s have a duel. I’m sure this matter will be concluded afterwards, no?”

I cannot use the excuse where I’m afraid of big stage forever. I believe what’s better is to overcome this weakness.

The only other risk that I can think of is if I stand out too much and people start being suspicious of me being an apostle. But now that I’m an A rank, I’ve more opportunity to show my real strength. Since Sati is participating as well, I think this is a good chance to make our name more popular.

If I don’t participate, Byron family will not be convinced. But if they make a pass at me afterwards, the elf will ride on that reasoning to start a war. Seems like the best route with less disadvantage is for me to obediently show up in the tournament.....

“I swear with my pride as a son of military family.”

“Well, are you fine with this, Masaru?”

This isn’t something that I prefer personally, but anything is better than a war. No, to be precise, isn’t George the worst offender in this case?

“You will be stricter with George after this, won’t you?”

“Ah, hmm.....”

He’s being suspiciously evasive towards my enquiry. Don’t tell me you’re going to leave George as he is.

“Tell only the truth.”

So, Tilika who has keep silent till now said.

“Masaru dono is strong, is he not? Once our battle is over, everyone in George’s family will know what George said was a lie. So, if George still doesn’t realise his mistake by then.....”

“As a Truth Official, I will have you stand forward before me.”

“Guess I have no choice.”

“That’s all?”

“That’s enough.”

So, Tilika said, and we decided to trust her.

I’ve experienced a similar thing. Getting interrogated by someone from Truth palace is not one of the pleasant memories that I can say.

Perhaps Tilika will make George look terrible.

Any more and things will turn troublesome. After all, George has attempted an attack against me. He also intentionally scatters bad tales about me in his household.

He was simply attempted an attack, but since I’m a commoner, he will not be charged anyways. There is no way for a commoner like me to put a charge on Byron Family.

Gustav is here to propose a personal duel to me. The elves overreaction and their threats have nothing much to do with it. The duel itself will be held during Gladiator Competition. I don’t like the place where we are going to have our duel, but the duel itself clearly will be something fair and square by using our own blade and sword.

Nothing is unclear.

Nothing is going to happen to George, and there is clearly nothing that I can gain from this battle.

I wonder if it's possible for me to hit George afterwards. Oh, there is 100 gold coins too.

"Regarding the duel, I think it's fair for me to pull out if you don't lay out an appropriate offering. Right now, you are offering me 100 gold coins. Don't you think that is a tad unreasonable?"

Not enough. There is no way that's enough, not when I'm about to have a beating in public eyes.

Should I negotiate for an increase in case I won? Few times.....no, about 10 times more. That will net me around 100 million yen.

"Frankly speaking, the amount is so trifling."

"Hmm, but....."

"Then let's do it like this. The request fee is omitted if I lose the duel. On the other hand, if I win, I'll demand the request fee to be 10 times more."

Win, 100 million. Wow look at his high nose, so confident.

The duel is soon, but from my observation, he doesn't look any stronger than Lazard san.

"1000 gold coins huh, I accepted. But bear in mind that I'll not go easy on you?"

Gustav easily made a big decision without any hesitation. Whether he's making light of me, or he still have spare room for such pricing.

"Very well. I'll crush you with all I've got. More importantly, those 1000 gold coins, I believe you will prepare them as arranged?"

"I'll make sure to prepare them before our duel. But, in case you lose, you sure you're fine without any remuneration?"

"Let me tell you something before our duel is concluded, in case you complain later. Based on what the Adventurer Guild instructor has once said to me, he believes that my ability is enough to aim for the overall victory."

“Heh, then let me tell you something too. I won a second place when I participated five years ago. And by this year standard, I don’t think I will lose, not even once.”

Seriously. He is awfully confident.....

“I’ll look forward, to our battle tomorrow.”

I may look composed, but it’s nothing but a feint. What should I do now?

If I lose this duel, I’ll just bring an embarrassment to myself, and working for free, too.

“Forgive me, Masaru.”

“Actually, Tilika did nothing wrong.”

It’s the Truth Official who is on fault. Also, George.

“Um, maybe it’s because I said I wanted to participate.....”

Definitely not Sati fault, either.

“Still, you’re going to enter the tournament. You fine with that?”

Ann said to me worryingly.

“Well, it’s going to be fine.”

I might be pretending to be tough, but I’ve been watching the Gladiator Competition for two days now, and I pretty much am familiar with their atmosphere. I thought the fights were going to be spectacular, but I never expected them to be this stoic.

Even the other visitors are watching the matches quietly. If I just concentrate on the match, then I’ll somehow do it, perhaps.

As for tomorrow main round, I think they will hold two matches simultaneously. That's to say, I'll not attract that much attention.

So, I think. Or, what I believe.

Since they're going to be an A rank match, it's safe to assume that the match will be conspicuous to some extent.

No matter how much I try to sneak around, it's hard to remain non-conspicuous unless I'm hiding behind a dark curtain.

What for sure is, no matter how much I think about it now, I'll never came up with any clever ideas that I can use to avoid this duel.

“Anyway, Sati. Want to practice for a while?”

As for our afternoon plan today, going out to play is cancelled.

I spent chilling myself inside the Elf Mansion.

My stomach is churning when I think about tomorrow. But it wasn't bad enough that it warrants everyone to take care of me.

Chapter 15 ~ Main Battle, Preliminary Round, Versus Gustav

The stadium is tightly packed with visitors.

Both side of the ground now accommodate the participant who leave their seat to the venue for their match. Those participant from the qualifier cannot hold a candle to these people.

“This is the final qualifying battle. Today we are having a special match! The winner of this match will enter the main tournament.”

A moderator stood on the stage, and while facing the audiences, he is commenting with a loud, resonating voice that seems to reach inside the venue.

His commentary only introduces me and Gustave as new player. Our duel is not disclosed.

The clerk in charge guide Sati to the stage, and at the place where it's devoid of people, stood Gustave and Tilika, dressed in Truth Official garb. Together with them are people from the management. They are people who are involved with this matter.

“First, a promise is a promise.”

And the direction where Gustave points to is, a very good-looking keyed treasure box, and from the inside, I can hear the clink of gold coins. As for the amount, the people from the Commercial Guild went to take a look and they have guaranteed that there are indeed 1000 gold coins among the pile of coins.

However, despite them saying 1000 gold coins, I couldn't see that much.

“Before we start the match, I would like to hear the confirmation

about this duel.”

So, says the Truth Official representative.

“Representative of Byron family and Yamano family, both of you will fight fairly with your respective strength, and regardless of the result, both families will not leave any grudges. Will both of you swear on it?”

“I swear.”

“I’ swear.”

Then, Tilika started talking.

“If Masaru’s ability is proven in this duel, George Byron will receive an appropriate measure, and Masaru’s honour shall be restored among the Byron family.”

“I promise.”

I don’t care about George anymore.....all I wish for is to return to my home at my village.

“Are both of you ready?”

So, the Truth Palace representative asked. My mind is hardly prepared at all, but at least my equipment preparation is in place.

“Well then, let us welcome the warriors for the first match of the day!”

Cheers rise from the auditorium. This is going to be the first match for today. The spectator’s sights are all gathered here. Meanwhile, all participating players are gathering at this venue. This is getting more attention than I expected.

My stomach is churning and hurting. If it’s turning like this, then wouldn’t it better for me to participate from the start.

“Masaru sama.”

Sati who is with me calls me anxiously.

“It’s okay. It’s going to be okay.”

I took a deep breath, but my heart remains beating fast like an alarm bell. It’s an unprecedented tension.

I tell myself that everything is going to be alright.

I’m familiar with the equipment, and to add to that is my numerous training that I had for the past few days. I should feel no fear.

If I win, then I get 100 million yen. One hundred, million yen. What should I do with them?

Maybe I should buy an erotic slave. I’ve bought three so far, but none of them are willing to go that far.....

While my thought is preoccupied with strange stuff, I gaudily fall over the stairs going up to the stage. It’s a small staircase with four steps. Suddenly, a laughter unwinds.

“Oh boy, now that isn’t good.”

Shut up. I can hear the voices from the audience stand.

“You can still do your best next year——”

Hey you—get out from the battle stage!

“Hilarious. An A rank magic swordsman, but seems like his strong suit is his magic alone.”

That’s true.

“We can’t expect anything from him if he’s already in that state. Even if he’s in the best condition, it’s hopeless since his opponent is Gustave anyways. Betting on Gustave is a sure thing.....”

A heavy loss is fine too.....

I went to the starting position on the stage.

“I don’t mind even if you put up an uncouth fight.”

So, Gustave voice flies to my side.

“I-I’m fine.”

Despite my trembling voices and miserable appearances, I am well aware that this guy is way weaker than Sergeant dono. Moreover, it’s just a match with a referee. There is nothing to be afraid of. Concentrate. I have to concentrate on the match.

I stiffen, and the referee raised their hands. They’re going to signal the start manually.

“Start!”

It has already begun.

Our starting position is separated in a distance where a sword could not reach, and Gustave.....he doesn’t move an inch.

Gustave is equipped with a medium size shield type with one-handed sword in another hand. I’m wearing a small buckler, the type where you wear on your arm, and my sword is big. It’s heavy, but I have longer reach.

“I’ll give you the first move. Come and get me.”

He’s still composed. While I’ve lost my composure.

I dislike having to appear in front of a lot of spectators, and hearing their voices are making me feel restless. I used this sword for practice all the time, yet it felt way heavier than yesterday. And here I thought that I might be able to somehow do it once the match started.....

I drew nearer, first step, second step, till we finally met.

I need to defeat him quickly and finish this match as soon as possible.

I step forward. I swing my sword. First clash, second clash, we continued to trade blows. My body is moving steadily. I can fight.

Let's go.

So, I thought, and my own carelessness shown. I easily get caught with his feint.

I'm not prepared to defend against the incoming sword swing——evasion is——and I failed.

“I see. With this amount of skill, you serve around George's opponent.”

Crap, he got my dominant arm. This way I cannot put all my strength in my swing. Recovery.....

“I shall wait.”

Him waiting is much appreciated. Start casting 【Heal】——the pain has eased up.

Gustave is strong. I might have dug my feet a tad too deep this time.

Without giving any time for me to think, Gustave quickly makes his move. Receiving his attack. Getting hurt. Received his attack, again and again. Another feint——and it changes. Crap. Crap. I received yet another blow. I'm getting toyed with.

I tried to create a distance between us with my footwork, but he is not letting me escape that easily. Unlike my previous match with Nania san, Gustave is way stronger than her and his stamina is less likely to run out, hence his sword strike still retains the weight behind them.

At this rate, I'll probably be chewed up by him before I managed to put up a proper resistance.

Again, another attack aimed at my flank. Sharp pain course through my body. But this time he will not wait unlike the previous time.

“Masaru sama!”

Sati's voice can be heard clearly among the noises.

Damn it, this guy is supposed to be weaker than Sati.....another feint. This time I can see it clearly.

That's right. This guy is weaker than Sati. I can see his movement clearly. I can read his move if I'm calm.

I no longer run away, and I stopped my legs.

I fortified my defence. I calmly analyse his attack, block it and evade them.

He is weaker than Sati. Compared to Sergeant dono or Armand, he is league below them. I couldn't feel any pressure behind his attack.

Immediately after I performed the evasion, I turn to counterattack. First blow, followed by the second blow. He's quite good at using his shield. His defence is tough, too. If only I can use magic, then I can take him down with a single strike.

While we're exchanging blows, for a moment, our swords were locked together. Our movement stopped——【Small Heal】——Gustave tried to interfere by pushing his sword, but I already finished my casting. The pain got lighter.

We distanced ourselves and faced each other. He is an opponent that I need to be careful of, but not someone that I should be afraid. I can use Recovery Magic to tend to the injuries from his attack. However,

“Are you feeling unwell?”

“That's why I'm asking you to hold back.”

While we're talking, I cast 【Heal】 once again.

Even after looking at me healing myself, he is not in rush whatsoever. I bet he isn't fighting seriously yet.

Gustave adjusted his breath and slightly changed his stance. He adjusted his shield outward for a bit, then he makes his move.

I evaded, then I intercepted his attack. I tried to make a

counterattack. However, my attack merely brushes his shield, confirming his solidifying defence. His attacks afterward have a heavy weight behind them.

As expected, he's extremely skilful with shield. Gustave evaded my attack at the last minute and he actively preventing me from further attacking. I need to break his defence somehow.

I can still hear Sati's cheers. I tried to calm myself down while listening to Sati's voices. I no longer mind the great audience that came to watch. Gustave is just that strong, so he could afford to have that composure.

Thinking about it calmly, I see the speed of his swings and his power is way beyond my own.

Yet, all his attacks are block able.

Why does that happen?

Usually, I would have reach out to my Item Box or used my magic to deal with this situation, but such is prohibited in this tournament. His solid defence is immune towards frontal attack, although blending together feints and thrusts occasionally is too awkward.

The condition for winning.

I can avoid his charge well with my Evasion and Mind Eye skills.

Keep repeating the process, no matter how many times we met, I'll just use the same technique. Either way, I can't let the opponent has the first strike.

"Strong. Very strong."

The moment we were separated, Gustave said so. That's my line.

"You're still young, yet you possess such skills. You're also talented with magic. If this is a true death match, then there's no way I can win."

It would be nice though if magic is permitted to be used in this

tournament.

“But if it’s the sword alone there’s no way I will lose!”

Gustave is coming. I thought he was planning for something but for now I repeat the same flow.

However, his fighting spirit is clearly different.

Besides, I’m having plenty already.

I’m already fighting with all I have. I just couldn’t afford not to.

Since Gustave is highly skilled in both offense and defence, I couldn’t find a way to hit him.

Even if I went in forcefully, my attempt to attack with all my strength will only be warded off, and in turns create an opening. I may know what Gustave is trying to achieve, but I still cannot move carelessly. It’s a miracle that I’m not being finished off right in the middle of the stage.

The clashing of our swords is repeating many times over and over. Seems like this time he is not going to make a feint anymore and is pushing inch by inch. Is he planning to sip my stamina little by little? Certainly, I do have a small build and that may be reflected in my strength, but with my skills, I may have compensated for it.

Gustave made his move at last. At first, he is attacking with his shield, and next he set up a Shield Bash.

Before I noticed, Gustave’s shield was already drawn nearby to my body, simultaneously while he was stepping into my territory. It is a simple technique where the user hit with their shield, but it can still deal a good amount of damage if the opponent was directly hit by the hard shield. The only way to repel the shield is to fire off my own.

I may be inferior to him in physique, but there is no way my own power is lacking. I just have to step in firmly and accepted it with my shield—the next moment I intercepted his Shield Bash, a great shock run through my left shoulder. I’m taking the impact directly.

Crap. My bone might already be.....my left arm was already numbed. I cannot move it due to severe pain.

Gustave began his assault from that point onward. I can only either block it singlehandedly with my sword or evade it.

Casting 【Small Heal】——Evasion, casting complete. Again, casting 【Small Heal】——complete.

I still haven't recovered enough, yet. One more time.....another Shield Bash incoming.

My left arm has finally recovered after I healed it with magic twice. I take on his Shield Bash with a buckler on my injured left arm, barely able to stop his sword from pushing too close to my face.

No, it feels like my ear and my cheeks are coming apart. I cannot dodge it.

My attack only scratched the surface of his shield, though to lunge a continues attack on the same spot is troublesome. He is being hidden behind his shield so I couldn't tell where his attack is coming from until the last minute.

Just like before, he's launching another Shield Bash. In order to avoid his Shield Bash, I need to get away from him first.....so I fall back to the rear, and barely avoided his Shield Bash. Unfortunately, right now I've been chased to the edge of the stage.

Next, his incoming thrust will be.....not there. Then once again, he tried to initiate another Shield Bash. Falling from this stage is enough to make me disqualified.

I received a solid Shield Bash. I couldn't see his thrust. I directly suffered from his charge. I can only swing the sword in my right arm. As long my right arm is fine, I can continue to fight.

For the first time since we started crossing swords, my sword managed to hit nearby Gustave waist. Despite my strike becoming weaker due to shook in my hand, I still managed to make Gustave staggered from my strike, and I used that opening to escape from being cornered.

Chanting 【Small Heal】. My left arm can now move, slightly. One more time, 【Small Heal】——Gustave is now inching closer, already recovered and prepared for his next attack. I evaded his next attack. Then I launched my attack, rinsed and repeat. I cannot find a gap to cast another healing spell.

Another Shield Bash incoming. I forcibly move my hurting left arm to intercept it.

There! On the same time Gustave initiated Shield Bash, he also ignored his own defensive stance with his shield. While we simultaneously strike each other, as long I avoided getting a fatal wound, I can always heal them with Recovery Magic later.

My sword hit Gustave left shoulder, meanwhile his sword hit the side of my torso. My sword hit him slightly ahead than his and I felt a firm response. Gustave took it to his knee.

But I refused to collapse, though I cannot concentrate enough mana for healing spell since the pain is so intense that I have difficulty to breathe. I can barely muster strength to remain standing.

During the gap when I'm applying Recovery Magic onto myself, I permitted Gustave who is on his knee to gather his leftover strength to get on his feet. Like this, I don't think he can move anymore. His left hand is pretty much left swaying. He even let go of his shield and left it roll over. In his current state, if I can use Recovery Magic, then Gustave will no longer has any chance to win.

“O, oooooohhhhhhhh!”

Gustave stood up and let out a yell while raising his sword.

He will not give me any time to recover. Following suit, I endured my own pain and set up my sword. The sharp pain throbs at my flank each time I tried to move my body.

Gustave swing his sword down in a linear path, which doesn't make it harder for me to evade. It's clear as day that Gustave movement is riddled with damage that he has taken. Mostly he is just attacking out of desperation.

Each time, I evaded his sad attempt, and then I strike at his defenceless torso.

Gustave was slowly put to his knees, and he fell as it is.

When it looks like he is trying to get up, I give him one last swift strike. Then, the referee holds me and shouted, “We have the winner!”.

Cheers are raised surrounding the stadium.

Any movement that I make now are followed by an even more intense pain. I cannot afford to be pleased by my victory, and while I’m trying to focus my remaining mana, I can see the priest running, coming to my way. I’m saved.

“Heal——Heal——”

The pain withdrawn from my body at once. Recovery Magic is the greatest as always. If we’re depending on healing naturally then Gustave and myself would already be on the stretcher and send for hospitalization. No, to begin with, my chance to win almost slip away when I received the first damage.

From what I heard on the later day, people who are capable of using Recovery Magic are in advantage, and it’s quite a big deal if there are a lot of people who can actually use it in combat. In fact, the person who invited me to the tournament answered that he would actually love to be able to use this magic.

That is because there is insufficient Recovery Magic user everywhere in this world.....

With an addition of my own, they applied healing spell several more times and the pain completely disappeared. Gustave is finally getting up.

I have no word for the loser. Not only that, I don’t want to see his face anymore. I walked towards where Sati is, and I was greeted with magnificent applause from the auditorium, right when I get off the stage.

“Masaru sama!”

Sati hugged me after I descended from the stage. She had teary eyes. She must be worried after I took that much damage during this fight. Seeing her like this is unusual.

Sati has never seen me like this before, but this degree of injury is normal, and I’ve experienced them quite a lot each time I have training session with Sergeant dono. Thanks to that, I was able to remain standing today and could put up a fight. Experience is very important.

“I’m perfectly fine. These wounds are nothing but scratches.”

I said to comfort her.

“Heh. I’m glad then.”

“L-Lazard san.”

I flinched when Lazard san appeared so suddenly.

“I’m surprised to see you have grown this much stronger.”

Now that I remember, Lazard san is inside the same block with me. Another two more win and I will end up in final today.

When I found out about the pairing this morning, I’ve thought of losing if possible. But I’ve promised Shira chan that if I take on Lazard san then we will have a man to woman moment. If I lose midway through this competition, then she might lose interest. Now that I am aiming to raise Shira chan loyalty, it’s necessary for me to win.

“Masaru, you’ve become strong in a surprisingly short time. This might be my last chance to win against you. I’ll come at you with all my might.”

“I-I will not lose, either. But if I don’t win another two matches, then.....”

“You’ve just defeated the winning candidate. There’s no other who

can serve as your opponent in our group anymore.”

If Lazard san said that then I guess, he might be right.

“I’m really looking forward to our fight!”

Lazard san let out a feral smile akin to a carnivorous animal. Then, he turned away and left us.

A physique that gather admiration from the other. Bulging muscles. Sword that is several times bigger than mine.

Lazard san can calmly fight directly with a dragon and defeating it.

I did it too.....with a magic sword, though. I can’t do the same with a sword alone.

Do I really need to fight that person.....?

Chapter 16 ~ Main Battle, First and Second Round

“Masaru!”

After I returned to everyone, I was tightly hugged by Ann. At the same time, Lilia hugged me from behind. This is it; this is the one. It was worthwhile to put up the effort.

“Geez! Stop being so rash!”

I wanted to win smarter, but my opponent this time was not someone that I can afford such luxury.

“That person, he is very strong.”

Now that I think about it, there might be some other way available besides clashing sword with him head on. My speed and power are greater than him. But I couldn't come up with new strategies off the cuff.

“You gave it all you've got!”

So, Ellie said while tapping on my shoulder.

“Masaru sama, what should we do with this?”

Satie brought me a treasure chest full of gold coins.

“Wait a second. Masaru, what are we going to use this for?”

Ellie opens the treasure chests and look inside.

Hmm, what should I do with them?

“These gold coins amounted to 1000 pieces.....”

And, Shira chan eyes widened whilst she is peeking into the treasure chest.

Our household is quite prosperous. Combined, the amount of cash and property that we have can reach 1000 gold coins. But since the guild is keeping our reward, this is our first time seeing this much money on hand.

It's a man romance to have this large amount of gold. And not to mention that these are my pocket money. I can spend it on whatever I wanted.

In addition to that, all our necessities during our stay in Kingdom's capital is provided by the elves. Currently, I'm preoccupied with Shira chan, our latest slave. I don't want to add more. Our territory management also is doing well and there isn't much demand for more resources. It was just until recently that we received many gifts from everyone, so thinking of giving a present to everyone is out of question. There aren't many things that can compare, at least from what I have obtained.

Recently too, Ellie has stopped complaining about money. All Ellie's share of reward from our battle in the Elf Country was already sent to her parent. Furthermore, once we reach at her parent's house, we will help with the reclamation of the land by using my magic and that will surely help her family to grow.

To be frank with myself, I don't have any current need for these monies. Well, just by having it, doesn't mean it will turn into a hindrance.

"For the moment, there is nothing that I want. Hence, I'm keeping this money."

I don't know how much the Orichalcum magic sword will cost me, so I better save for it.

And then, as for the match just now, since I was betting on myself, I was able to make a profit. My one gold coin bet is now multiplied by five times, earning me four gold coins which amount to four hundred thousand Yen. I also bet one gold coin on an overall championship in our block for both Sati and I respectively. Sati is right, I've just landed a big and an unexpected winning.

There is a limit on how much 1 coin per bet can continue. I can make a lot of money by betting on Sati and myself, but if I do, the tournament management will catch on. Doesn't mean that they will conduct a check each time the betting counter is opened. Since it's categorized as a crime to bet above the upper limit, everyone is trying to protect themselves by betting normally. Though, I'll be exposed easily in front of the Truth Official.

"Did you managed to make money, Will?"

"Sure thing!"

It appears that all elves were betting on me.

Thank God. I'm truly glad that I didn't lose.....

"Still. I can't promise that I'm able to win through this block. If you really want to make money, then put it all in Sati."

The prediction for each block's winner were already closed, so it's kind of too late to tell them. I didn't have any time to tell them this morning since we already parted away before I went to see the pairing.

"Just how strong is that person called Lazard?"

"Around the time I was still a novice, even while using magic, I got beaten thoroughly."

"For real!?"

"Well, I don't think I will lose now that my skills have improved though....."

I said that because I want to retain my good image, but I can't see the ending where I can actually win.

Sergeant dono mentioned that we are about even, but I don't think I have enough strength to overpower him, nor did I have longer reach. Will I won if I have superior speed? However, the only time I have witnessed Lazard san being serious was during the dragon hunt, and that was only at a distance so it's unclear to me. I can't shake off my

uneasiness.

The next match begun while we were still talking. Then Tilika has finally return.

With regards to George dismissal, Gustave has been nominated again as a person responsible. Gustave is planning to temper George bottom up military style. 232

“George will mostly be sent out to the armed forces stationed at the frontier as a private.”

The frontier is, in other words, the area nearby to demon realm. As a young master from a noble family, serving as a private will prove to be difficult especially in that environment. He will survive though, since he is a capable Earth Mage. His appointed post came handy for us. His disposal is highly unlikely; hence this decision might have been made with us in mind. We don't mind it, as long he was sent far enough so he will never bother us again.

Sati's turn finally came around. Her opponent passed the preliminary round as well, so they cannot be weak, but still Sati managed to snatch an instant win.

Francesca won her round successfully, too.

It's finally the turn for my block to start their matches and Lazard san turn came.

My matches come after this; hence I get ready and went down to the venue.

There are 64 participants in the main tournament. They are divided into 8 blocks with 8 participants each. Only a single contestant who has won 3 victories in succession may advance to the final round tomorrow. I'm in the seventh block. My match is the eleventh for today, on the second stage.

The combinations were made based on drawing lots. No one is pulling the string from the back. It's just by mere coincidence that he was placed as one of the eight contestants.

Lazard san opponent is.....no good. He can still trade blow decently against Lazard san; however, Lazard san is still overpowering him. The match was over soon. the match isn't shedding any useful information at all.

My match is coming up next. I can't shake off my nervousness. The knot inside my stomach is getting tighter and tighter.

"Sati, please root for me again. Your voice is faint, but I can still hear it."

It's convenient to have Hearing Detection skill. If there is anything that is bothering me, we can still converse during the match.

The previous match is over. The matches often finished short. Once the blade is drawn, the match is decided with a single offensive move. It takes less than a minute to end.

Other normal contestants don't seem to have the same level of evasive manoeuvrability as me. Also, I couldn't find a single person who can use Recovery Magic even when there's an opening created by their opponent.

There is a good chance to win if I'm able to capitalize in this area.

I cautiously went onto the stage while listening to Sati's voice.

Unlike the first match, this time several matches are ongoing simultaneously, so the attention was dispersed. Since there are several other matches other than mine, there isn't any specific excitement on us. If I concentrate on Sati's voice, the nervousness is controllable.

I received an information mentioning my opponent this time isn't that strong, however it would be good to not let my guard down. It won't be funny if my opponent turn out to be a disciple of Sword Saint in disguise.

I positioned myself at the starting position. Good, this time there shouldn't be any problem. I can feel my fighting spirit rising.

"Begin!"

The match has now commenced. My opponent doesn't make any move. Looks like he is solidifying his defence.

I advanced with full caution—and a small feint. I made it so it looks like I'm stepping to the right, while I quickly step to the left. Naturally, I activate Stealth and utilized Stealthy Step. It is one of my favourite combination.

First, I'm going to take a good look on him. So, I thought, then I landed a clean hit. And my opponent was on their knees.

What? Is he finished?

"We have a winner!"

Looks like this match is over. This is how it will be. This is their level.

I get down from the stage feeling unsatisfied.

I get ready to watch the next match which will begin shortly together with Sati. The winner from this match will compete with me next.

The next match soon turns out to be a mess. Both parties managed to inflict large wounds on each other. While both clearly looks completely exhausted, they continue to desperately fight.

They were giving their all, but honestly, they seem to be weak. No, certainly they are more skilful compared to the other participant in qualifier, but.....there is no way this is the level in the main tournament?

"Is Sati's block filled with people of this level, too?"

"I don't think there are any strong people."

Unlike the qualifier, there are lesser people, so the stage where Sati's block is having their bout is visible even from here. If there aren't any problems with Sati's pairing, we can still make a profit even if I lose.

The match is finally decided.

The winner is waving his hand in joy after he finished his treatment. When the audience applauded, he gets off the stage in response.

I, too, am applauding him, when our eyes met. In an instant, his happy face turned cloudy and his eyes look distracted.

When you are delighted to secure a painstakingly hard win and your next opponent turn out to be Sergeant dono.....I understand that too well.

But I'm not too sympathetic. He is not someone who is fit to fight against Lazard san in a fight. At least, I'll make him exit so that he wouldn't need to suffer.

Honestly speaking, I would love to exit right here at this moment, but there is still Sati.

I'm very worried that she wouldn't be able to compete if I let her know of my intention of quitting right here and right now. I gulp down all my complaint and will not show anything on my face.

Each block has finished their first-round match.

For second round, the match betting odds were updated in between recess. I asked Will to go see it and turns out both Sati and I have the lowest leverage, that there is almost no profit to bet.

Second round. Sati and Lazard san match ended without any difficulty.

Then, comes my second-round match.

Since this is already my third battle, I no longer feel out of place. As for my opponent for this match.....his facial expression shows his preparedness for death.

Surely, I have the same look whenever I'm facing off against Sergeant dono too.

I thought of the possibilities of him laying out some traps, but he lunges directly at me right after the start signal was released. He

swung his sword down and I intercept it as it is. With his seemingly poor physique, I thought I would've blow him away.

Our sword collided. Only when I take on his attack do I realised how solid his strike is.

Surprised to see his attack was unexpectedly stopped, he easily lost his balance when I pushed him back. I smashed around the area of his temple with my sword's handle. It may be from above the helmet, but it is at least strong enough to cause a concussion. Then, after he get on his knee, I laid my sword on his shoulder.

"I give up....."

My third match was over without a hitch. It was an easy win compared to my previous fight with Gustave.

Getting off the stage, I noticed Lazard san gaze is directed to me.

The triumphant feeling inside me dissipated in an instant. I nodded and return to where Sati and everyone else is.

Before the final match in each block start, there was a long break that also serve as a meal break.

While I was in the middle of digesting a good soup and eating fruits, the stage was remade by the Earth Mage. They were combining two stages into a large stage. It appears that the final match will be conducted by turns.

At last, I'm going to fight Lazard san. He was grinning.

Thinking back, no matter whether it be training or actual battle, when it comes to Lazard san, I will feel like fainting right away. Although, my experiences have accumulated over the last time, and I have perfected my evasion skill.

It would be nice if I can use Recovery Magic, however chances are I would get crushed by him if I'm not able to time wisely.

The question now is whether my strength is competitive with his. If

my power hasn't grown much, then this match will turn out like our past battles where I couldn't put up much fight.

Also, it is rather unknown whether I can win over him with my speed. I lost in term of experience too.

"If it's Sati, how do you planned to fight against Lazard san?"

"I will put a dent on him with my feet. Never receive the opponent's attack, I'll try to whittle them bit by bit. That person's sword looks like it's heavy, hence I think it's easy to be evaded."

The speed of his swing is relatively slow compared to the other swords which are swung by one hand.

Only relatively, still.....

"I think Masaru sama will have no problem evading that kind of sword."

However, I still need to be careful of his variety of attacks. Lazard san is a strong person even bare handed. He is also capable of strong kick and huge jump. Everything combined, they will prove to be an overwhelming power which I couldn't do anything about.

In the end, I have no idea how strong Lazard san really is, so I have no choice but to experience it on hand during our battle. Honestly, it's too risky. I want to go home now.....

The final match for each pair starts.

Sati's match is starting soon, so I decided to get off and go nearer to watch them.

The first match is featuring Francesca. Huge cheers are coming from her match. She is a member of royalty and a beautiful woman, truly a flower who is well versed in fighting in a battlefield. Her popularity is throughout the roof.

Her opponent is a beastmens. Although their physical ability is high, they aren't just fast enough. They were driven to the wall in the blink

of eye and defeated.

“Sati, give your best shot!”

“Yes!”

Sati’s opponent is a Dwarven warrior.

Although he is solidly built with wide body, he is not any bigger than Sati in stature. He is wielding a two-handed weapon called Halberd, a long-range weapon that appears to be a spear with an axe attached on its end.

That long-range weapon looks like it’s a hassle.....but Sati seems to have taken a like to it and after a short battle, her opponent was easily defeated.

He attempted to attack with the handle, but they were firmly grabbed by Sati and it got completely stopped. Then she hit that place with her sword. As expected, power is important.

The next match was won by an excessively gargantuan person.

He is as big as a Troll. The power of an ancient?

The fourth, fifth, and sixth matches went on smoothly, and finally, my turn has come.

I climb up the stage. This is no longer the time when I can get bothered by the audience.

Worst case, it’s possible that I might die from his sword.

Hearing the “Start!” signal, Lazard san mouth distorted with a grin.

“Now, let’s the fun start!”

Well that, without a mistake, I think you are the only person having fun here.....

Chapter 17 ~ Main Battle, Third Round, Fight Against Lazard

My final match started on the first day of the main battle.

So, why am I putting up with this painful thing the best that I can?

Partly, it is for the sake of Protection.

Will was overjoyed. The already high evaluation from the elves towards me are climbing. Naturally, the same can be said to Shira chan as well. Alongside that, I also received a great reward. So, I thought.....

I desperately evaded the incoming great sword. It is a large-sized sword that is usually handled with both hands, but Lazard can easily wield it with a single hand. They are heavy; hence people usually have an insufficient speed to land a hit. Packed inside it was pure violence, a feeling that I've never felt from Sergeant dono nor Sati.

If I am fighting against a monster, I can simply defeat them and retreated, however this time I'm fighting under rules and restrictions.

I can feel death creeping closer to me than ever. No, does not people normally die if they got hit by something like this!?

Like usual, I activated Stealth and utilized Stealthy Step. Not only that, the sword has an irregular movement.....I evaded it. He continues attacking but I evaded most of his attacks. Either that or I received it with my sword or shield.

Damn. I am on the defensive spot.

He avoided my counterattack by leaping to the back. I try using a Hit and Away tactic, but he can perfectly see my movement. Even with his large body, he managed to dodge them with high dexterity.

My legs halted. When I can't defeat him with a single hit, it's a matter

of time before we exchange blows face to face.

I took on Lazard san attack with my sword. The sound of iron hitting each other echoes. The aftershock is immense, but I could stop them with both of my hands.

Our swords immediately get locked with each other. Whenever I tried to push forward, Lazard san pushed back stronger.

“Was that, the extent, of your full.....strength?”

In response to his provocation, I start to push back harder. Right, I’m going to let him taste my true strength.

Our faces are close to each other at a breathtakingly close distance, then I push our interlocked swords with full strength.

Both of us struggle to gain an upper hand from each other. There isn’t much difference in our strength!

“My.....strength.....will overcome, you.”

However, as I was getting closer to the limit, I was pushed down. Due to the gap in our physical size, I’m at a disadvantageous position since I’m being pushed from above.

I gently sweep the sword sideways and break our deadlock. There is no pursuit. Lazard san was left in a state of disarray with his face red while he is trying to control his breathing.

If there is no difference in our strength, that means the only thing that differentiate us in this match will be either our skills or speed. Since his sword is longer and has more reach, my only chance to win is by getting closer to him. Once I managed to jump right to his front, then the advantage should be mine.

I slowly walk.....and leapt forward.

I commence my offense. I throw in together small continuous attacks. Occasionally, he counterattacks but without avoiding, I received them with my shield, then I ward off his sword. His attack was strong, but not enough to stop my rush.

The power that he carries in his blow is terrifying and I'm forced to firmly receive it. Each time I received a hit, I already let out at least 2 to 3 blow myself.

If my memory serves me right, it has been a while since I last have a go with Lazard san. It should be around the time before I departed to Gorbas Fortress. Since then, my skills have increased, and I have undergone numerous training. There isn't a reason for me to be fearful of him.

Without a mistake, he is strong. His attack carries a power that will end this match right away even if it only managed to land a hit once. But, as Sati said, I can dodge them as long I remained calm. Though, not as if my attack is making any difference as well.

Once I have put a distance, I rearranged my breath. Then, I start chanting [Regeneration]—I must go one step further if I wish to win.

It was the same as Gustave, their defence are just too hard to penetrate. Otherwise, there is no way they can survive in this dangerous world for many years living as a warrior. Truly bothersome.

Even if I used magic, Lazard san will not quiver. He seems to be waiting for me.

Casting, completed. Like this, it's fine even if I sustained small damages.

I grip my sword with both my hands. I decided to give up my defence.

I step forward and hammer into him with all I've got. He intercepted my blow with all my strength behind it with his sword. There is no counterattack incoming.

Lazard san was forced to be on defensive to withstand my barrage of attacks. However, he has precisely blocked all my attacks.

If I don't end this fast, my Regeneration will soon worn off.....the next attack needs to hit for sure. Lazard san is changing his stance. Now, he is holding his sword with both his hands. That alone is enough to

change the whole atmosphere in this battle.

His swelling bloodlust is suffocating, and I am left unable to take a step.

Here he comes. But it's a long sweeping stroke. I evaded his first strike. I received his second, returning his swing with my sword. At the same time, the screeching sound of two swords meeting each other resounded inside the entire hall. My hands are numbed.

The third swing. Again, each of our swords are interlocked once again.

It's coming again.....but, this time they are coming faster!?

There isn't enough time to intercept his attack. I dodged it at the last moment.

Lazard san attack is coming again, and I block it with my sword. However, I'm unable to take it. I'm completely being pushed down.

This time, I'm pushing back against him with all my strength. But Lazard san is a step faster than me. I was unable to catch up to him beginning from his second shot. And each time our swords met; I was defeated.

Our strengths are supposed to be equal, and yet there is a gap in our offensive power. Other than the difference in our reach, perhaps there is a gap in our skills. Whenever he is making a huge swing, there isn't a wasted movement produced at all.

His attack while he is using both hands are faster and feel heavier. I don't think I can defend against it with the small buckler attached to my arm. Either I take it on with my sword, or I dodged it.

While I was enduring his attacks, Lazard san suddenly changed his movement. He started to use some kind of footwork.

No.....he is covering our distance with a long leapt. The force behind his sword is getting stronger.

I've seen this. This is the move that he used when he defeated the

dragon.

A technique used to defeat a larger enemy. A deadly blow that landed on the dragon's neck.

This attack is utilising the hit and away tactic. I'll likely die if one of those attack landed on me. Nonetheless, there is no mistake that he is going to continue making those great swing.

I continue to dodge his attack, and occasionally launch a counterattack whenever the opportunity present.....and my move was predicted. I defended with my shield, but then he changes his grip to one handed and launched another attack.

I got a cut at my flank and bloods are pouring out. The blade should be round, but it seems that the tip of the accelerated sword has shaved my leather armour and tore through my body. I don't have the leisure to confirm it on the spot. I stop the blow from his following barrage of attacks. The wound is shallow. I can still properly move. The pain is being suppressed by my Regen recovery.

He is distancing from me in another attempt to make those huge leapt, but this time, I'm chasing him. There is no way I'm going to allow him to do those huge, dangerous sweeping swing again.

He is defending against my two handed, full swing attack. He is capable of changing from one handed to two handed at will without breaking his rhythm. It isn't something that I can skilfully reproduce. Seeing an opening, he immediately distanced himself, and then he lunged forward with a powerful strike embedded with a deadly might driving behind it. Ps. 243

Our sword met again, but this time a different sound other than a clashing metal arises.

"Ah....."

I wonder, how many times have I pushed my sword to the extreme to meet his attacks. The sword got broken around the handle.

I brought it together into this tournament thinking that it's better since I'm used to using this sword. Thinking about it, I already used it

thoroughly even before coming to the Royal Capital. This sword was abused very frequently.

I was ready to dodge Lazard san sword, when my stance suddenly broke.

Ah, this time I'm dead. Aren't I full of opening right now!?

His pursuit.....never arrived. Lazard san has stop moving and lowered his sword, while taking a distance. I'm saved. If he was going for other attacks just now, I would have suffered more injuries.

However, there is no way I can continue this match anymore. I cannot win. It's inevitable, but I have to give up.

"Lazard san, I guess this make my loss....."

"Referee, please let this man change his weapon!"

My words were interrupted by Lazard san loud voice.

Eh, I'm fine with losing.

"We will prepare a new weapon soon"

So, said the referee.

"It's a festival, after all. If this fight ended this way, I'm sure you wouldn't be satisfied, don't you?"

Probably, the person who is going to feel dissatisfied the most is him.....

All in all, I wonder how I should planned move now. There really is no win over this. Like it or not, I will have to withstand that attack again. While I was waiting for the replacement sword, I think over Lazard san previous move.

First of all, my two-handed swordsmanship was a mere imitation of Lazard san. The real thing was different, our moves were not comparable. Our body flow, including the pace of our foots. Can I do it too?

The replacement swords have arrived. I pretend to make my choice in order to gain more time. There is only a single match left for me today. I shall be fine.

I just have to find a good sword and hold it to ensure that I have a good grip. I test-swing it. It doesn't appear like they were in hurry; hence I'm taking my sweet time to make my choice.

Originally, Lazard san is a two-handed sword user. In addition to that, he has those step-work that he used during our match. I'm always there when Sati was doing her intensive training with Sergeant dono. I even got involved with the experiment-like practice. I can do it.

"Sorry for making you wait."

"That was an awfully long time. Were you planning to show me something interesting? Or were you simply taking a break?"

I cannot tell him that I'm going to imitate his move from this moment on, hence I stay quiet. I drop my waist a little bit more than usual and pull the sword back, almost an identical stance like Lazard san.

"Heh."

It's unlikely for me to win the match this way, however I have run out of other ideas. Worst case scenario, I'm going to fail, and everything will end in one stroke.

Seeing that I was ready, they released the signal to begin. However, Lazard san continue to talk without moving.

"Did you use Recovery Magic?"

I don't feel well. If there isn't any hope of winning, I will only be prolonging this heightened pain uselessly if I get defeated in one shot.

Chanting **【Regeneration】**.

But I cannot wait any longer. Cutting corners any longer and I will incur the other's wrath.

Seems like he is giving me the first move, so I made an approach run.....then I swing down my sword. He readily evaded them. However, my assault starts now. I muster all my vigour and killing intent available in my body throughout the continuation of my barrage. Even those got evaded.

I created a distance between us. It just wouldn't connect. I'll try one more.....and I failed yet again. Coming for my third attempt, this time Lazard san also made his move.

A counterattack.....I was unable to dodge it. The attacker become the attacked. The pain goes away quickly with the effect of Regeneration skill.

I tried to back away again. And, this time I distanced myself quite far from Lazard san. I prepared in advance and coincidently, we both did an approach run at the same time. Our swords clash up front right in the middle of the stage. Without minding my chafed hands, I went for a subsequent attack.....but it was useless. I was too slow. Proceed to defence.

Again, I get away from him. We ended locking swords directly this time, but out of fear of getting injured, I stepped out. This will not do. I need to be faster and put more power.

I took a distance two times further away than our starting position and again face against him. I re-chanted Regeneration spell. I enveloped myself with power. My speed too.....I need to become sharper and faster, like Sati.

I started running. Due to the sufficient changes in my speed and attack power, his timing was all wrong and got slightly off point. Lazard san sword went off course for the first time, and his stance was slightly broken.

My following attack will be my first real strike. It's nothing more than a faint touch from my sword tip, so I cannot expect it to deal a damage.

But I also suffered damage at the same time. It was quite an intense pain. Quite a profound cut, maybe it was due to his long reach.

However, it won't become a hindrance to the battle. The injury will recover soon.

Everything is proceeding quite well right now. I will put up more speed, and the faster my sword move, the more chance I can disrupt the timing of my attack.

Our swords clashed again at the middle of the stage. We exchanged blow several times and get separated. One more time. I can do it. I can face him head on. More, I need to go faster and stronger.....

However, despite us being evenly match.....I wonder why I manage to hit him with my previous attack? My aim was misplaced.....since there is a moment difference in our swinging speed, if I managed to take advantage of this situation.....

Almost simultaneously, we both drew our swords.....and for the first time, I won. I finally thwarted Lazard san sword for the first time ever with my swordsmanship.

Now that I'm in more favourable position, I launched my second strike.....when we simultaneously striking each other. However, I get too close and neither my speed was on point. My leather armour has reduced the damage received by half. It is not in a degree where I cannot recover.

Again, both of use collided after an approach run. This time, Lazard san has shifted the timing. However, I still move faster than him. I amend the timing to cope with him.....and again, we simultaneously strike each other.

No, I managed to defend with my shield. The damage that I received is also light. I will recover soon.

More. I need to move faster. I need to step further inside.

And I stepped too deep inside. Evasion, I couldn't make it on time. I received his attack with my sword.....but I lost. Whether to evade or receive the attack head on, my sword has lost the power driving it due to the broken momentum, and there is no way I can block Lazard san sword like this, so I ended up suffering a shock through my

shoulder. The damage that I received is.....fortunately not fatal. It felt like my bones were broken, and I couldn't move my arm. It's a searing pain that made me feel like dying, but I can still continue the battle. Plus, the severe pain heals completely while he hesitates to pursue.

After each time I endured Lazard san attack, my body recovered to the original state.

“I should have brought you down by now.....”

No wonder he was surprised, my Recovery Magic performance is broken. Whether it be recovery amount or casting speed, mine has surpassed the level of any professional priest. Thanks to the blessing of skill, I have eliminated any probability of failure.

Besides, I can feel the pain subsides thanks to Regeneration skill.

Usually, people would have broken into sweat by now. They would be rendered immobilised from trying to bear the pain. However, immediately after I received a damage, the intense pain is soothed on the spot with my recovery rate. The pain is manageable somehow given if I endured the pain for a second.

“Sadly, I have run out of my Recovery Magic just now.”

Unfortunately, my over reliance on Regeneration has worn it out.

There is no way I can afford another lengthy cast anymore.

“Fine, I'll wait.”

Chanting 【Regeneration】.

“You're truly curious.”

My wounds healed, but Lazard san wounds remained. So far, the damage that I inflicted is small, but if it's piled up.....plus, more or less there is some stamina recovery.

“I love smashing an opponent with perfect condition right on the front. Don't you think that is fun? To tell you the truth, I wish you

are allowed to use magic too.”

I wonder how I should deal with him with my magic. I cannot use a large magic because our commencing distance is not that far away. My elementary level attack magic packed quite a punch, but I don't think they are enough to be a turning point. Besides, whatever I decided to do; this is a true battlefield. One mistake, and I will be cut into half.

As expected, it's better to wrap up everything soon.

I finished chanting. Then, I dropped my hip very low.

Our attack power is equal. My speed is greater than his. However, whilst my move looks like the real deal, it's nothing but a replica..... I couldn't land an attack at all.

After we exchanges several offense and defence in turns, at an instant, Lazard san body seems to have wavered.

During the opening created when his balanced was destroyed, I..... without wavering, took my sword and.....ah.....it was a trap.

Even while losing his balance, Lazard san proceed his attacking motion. I was lured.

It is impossible to dodge. My shield may potentially hinder his sword, but at this rate I just swing my sword down. I cannot afford to lost my way.

I'm in an overhead position above Lazard san shoulder. Meanwhile, Lazard san sword is at my body level. My attack needs to hit.

—————both of us got blown off and rolled on top of the stage.

I hardly felt my body. My consciousness is.....

“Masaru sama!!”

Sati's frantic voices made me regained my consciousness. Right, if I fall here, wouldn't it make this the second time after our fight with those Harpy? If that is happening again, then.....

When I raised my face, I saw the referee is looking at my face.

“Recovery, magic.”

After hearing the referee word, I start coughing violently while facing him. My entire mouth is full with the taste of blood.

I lifted up my upper body.....my sword, there it is.

I grabbed the sword. Lazard san is.....he was about to stand up from being on his knees.

It seems that my attack connected properly. Now, I only need to wait to recover.....my recovery has stopped. The Regeneration skill has worn out.

My Mana. With my Mana..... activate 【Small Heal】 . Just when I was finally able to raise my whole body, Lazard san was already swinging his sword down on me. I lifted my sword above my head and blocked it somehow.

While I was blocking the sword coming from above my head, I got kicked at my defenceless stomach. I couldn't dodge. I took it head on. I was sent flying again, rolled over and collapsed. A sharp pain ran through the area around where my stomach was kicked and I was sent out of breath.

Mana.....My mana. Gather!

Chanting 【Small Heal】 . The pain has lightened. I can still move. I haven't let go of my sword yet.

Chanting 【Small Heal】 . I stand up. Right in front of me stand Lazard san.

“Unbelievable. I was sure the kick just now was perfect.”

So, he said and his next attack follow shortly after. I possess a skill that enhance both my will power and being sturdy. I have never realized the effect so far, however the only reason I managed to endure might be thanks to them.

I took on his attack. He tried to kick again but I dodged them. Since it isn't a surprise attack anymore, there is no way they will hit.
【Small Heal】.

I cast another 【Small Heal】 while being on defensive.

I slowly took a small breath. I don't feel any pain at all. Lazard san breathing is already ragged and he is sweating bullet. His injured shoulder should be very painful.



“My wounds are cured. I don’t think Lazard san has any chance to win anymore?”

I wonder if he is going to give up. Over his dead body, I guess.

“I guess my win will be seen as cheap too if I were to defeat you, who only has a single usable hand left.”

I don't intend to win this the easy way.

“Well, it appears that I might not be able to see proper conclusion to our battle.....”

Lazard san made a stride forward. He cannot continue to fight long with those injuries that he sustained.

Maybe he is planning to wrap everything up.

My opponent is a person who has one of his arms disabled.

I couldn't say that this is going to become an easy win.....however, I would like to thank him for letting me see this battle to the utter end.

For that, I accepted the challenge upfront and rise————

Chapter 18 ~ Tournament Final

First Match, Battle Against Francesca

This battle is finally balanced after my opponent was left with only a single hand usable.

Am I weak? Or was Lazard san too strong? Supposedly, the person with Recovery Magic should be overwhelming the other by dealing more damage yet———

Lazard san remains standing till the last moment. After I healed my wounds, I stand up slowly.

The match is already over. I don't have to worry about it anymore.

It's finally over. That was my honest impression.

Our match end after Lazard san gave up. After having rehashed our simultaneous strikes from the first half of the match, it was decided that it's impossible for him to continue the match considering the damage he received at his right arm is as bad as expected.

The victory is mine, but wouldn't there be a suspicion that we are match fixing since I was winning this match miserably?

My victory is unexpected.

“Why the long face, when you have won? Rest assured; for this victory is definitely yours. No one is complaining. It's fine to stick your chest high.”

Perhaps I'm the only one who is worried. This is the victory that I've finally achieved after spilling so much blood.

Maybe, this is the first time I suffered so much injuries from this tournament.

“If you are not convinced, then I don’t mind if we have another go. Right, ref.”

“Yes. There is a precedent for a rematch after both contestants healed their wounds. However, it can only be done if both sides agree.....”

I shook my head. I prefer not to do that.

“Well, I’m already hungry. Next time, once you have grown stronger, I’ll let you become my opponent again. I’m looking forward to that time!”

I did have plan to train at the Sword Saint’s place, but how much growth will I have, I wonder?

If my level goes up, then my status will grow further, meaning my speed and power will rise as well. Just that recently there isn’t any growth to both my level and status. Unless I get involved in a large-scale battle, there is no way I can earn much experience. Hence, any expectation for a big improvement is hopelessly thin. I may not meet your expectations.

Although, with my magic included, I think I can give him a better fight. Rather, considering how the actual battle goes, it is more practical to coordinate my combat skill with magic.

I don’t want to turn him into cinders with my Fire Magic. Therefore, by adding features like rapid fire and stronger air hammer in addition to large Golem, I believe they are enough to satisfy Lazard san battle lust. Not like I will do it for real.

After Lazard san treatment was over, we received a great applause as we exited the stage. I wonder to whom these applauses are directed to? The audiences might be booing me, and honestly, I’m too afraid of the audience’s reaction that I turn deaf ears to them.

Since I won, that means I still have another match to fight tomorrow. I also need to buy the lottery for the tournament’s final after this.

Fighting all out for an extended period truly makes me tired and aches the whole body. I'd wish to go back home, put on my bedding and sleep. But I have acquired a lot of knowledge on the side. Without a doubt, my swordsmanship has improved, and I also acquired Recovery Magic operation knowledge in actual battle, especially the ability of Regeneration was also known. They are valuable combat data that I will never gain no matter how many times I practiced.

As Sergeant dono put it, the tournament proved to be a good experience. I want to practice for a little while my memory is still clear.....

"Deep in my heart, I would like to renounce you from the match, and made you rest for at least three days."

So, Ann told me right after I came back.

I vomited blood, and my internal organs must have been considerably damaged. I would be delighted to abstained from the next match and spend my times with my family but alas, now isn't the correct time. The expectation around me is heavy and crushing.

Well, the wounds itself has completely cured without any issues. I should be fine if the match can be ended shortly. In reality, I'm still amidst recovery, and going overboard will definitely set back my recovery process. From my understanding, the injury is not something life threatening.

"Bro! We made a great profit!"

Alongside a sound of coins heavily clinging to each other, Will excitedly proclaim while he is talking to me. Despite being a prince, his mind is surprisingly like a commoner. The coins weren't that much.

"That's great. I was betting on myself and now I have gained a profit."

Of course, I was betting on Satie as well, and everyone seems to have done the same.

However, the problem is tomorrow. My physical condition is weakened, and it may bring an impact to Sati. If I wish to put Sati in the final, then I need to cleverly pull the drawing lot. Afterward, the overall championship candidate, Francesca will have to face against Sati. Then, Sati will win the overall championship while I became a second runner-up.

Not long after the final match ended, the drawing lots session started. The contestants are introduced as each one goes up on the stage, and after each contestant has finished introducing themselves, everyone take turn to draw lot from a cylindrical shape drawing lot's box in order.

I never heard about this bit where contestant need to be introduced.....

Sati was introduced, and it's pleasant to see the amount of cheers from the crowd. I'm completely unwilling to do this, but without showing it outside, I waited for my introduction to end while leaving my mind empty.

I've defeated one of the winning candidates despite entering this tournament for the first time. Though, I have shown a strong Recovery Magic ability as weapon during my previous match.

The drawing box is getting passed over and Francesca draws number two.

Sati draws number four. That means these two won't met until semi-final.

Now it is my turn to draw the lot. The order of withdrawal follows the order of our match for today. I'm the seventh out of eight today, so there is still at least two more number left. What left is number one, who will be paired with Francesca, or number five. Please, not number one.....

"Contestant Masaru, number one!"

This is the end. Tomorrow morning I'm going to face against Francesca in the first game. If I won, then I need to face Sati.

Well, it's unlikely that I'm going to win the first match tomorrow, so I'm going to place my bet on Sati. No but what about my first match? And against Francesca? Can I abstain? I guess not.

I quietly rest inside the carriage that came to fetch us while returning to the Elf Mansion. Since Sati insists on taking care of me, the matter of my food and my clothes were all left to her. After taking a bath, I'm now resting in the living room when Tilika, who was acting separately behind our match returned.

"Regarding the matter of dealing with George, the Truth Official has confirmed the responsibility."

So, Tilika came to me and reported.

If George is entrusted to Byron family, he might receive more lenient punishment. The Truth Palace is also in friendly term with the military. It is said that they have the means to send out George as an apprentice for a military force that is stationed at the frontier and is out of control from the Byron family.

Being stationed at the foremost line of the force, he will never be treated as the son of a noble family and he is required to work there for at least two years.

In this tough world, I'm sure the level of severity is no joke. Besides, the demons have their military stationed there. I cannot imagine what will happen throughout the two years he will be spending there. I'll just pray for his happiness.....

Now, what will happen to George doesn't concern me much. Sati takes my priority. There is a hint of melancholy in herself since she is required to hit me for real in this tournament. We did it in daily basis during our training, however when it comes to a match, things can get quite crazy. It has become obvious from today's match that it's impossible to stop ourselves at the last moment before we hit the other. I, too, doesn't want to hit Sati.....

"I will not hesitate, and without giving up, let's do our best."

Once I've said that, the tense atmosphere around Sati dropped.

After thinking for a moment, I cut a piece of note, and proceed to write on it.

“If you won against me.....no. I’ll give this as a reward, if you become the champion in this tournament.”

“Masaru one day access ticket?”

“Correct. You can have me for yourself for one whole day and do whatever you want.”

“By whatever, you mean I can ask for anything that I want?”

“Definitely, anything is fine.”

Well, I find Sati to be cute whenever she acts selfishly. Plus, she seldom asks for what she wants.

“I will do my best!”

Good, that’s great. I can see her spirit slowly recovering. Sati needs to get even stronger. She needs to be capable of swimming through whatever this world is throwing at her. So that she can survive, even if I fall.

The match begins at noon. However, while I was asleep, the time past by in a blink of an eye.

I still don’t feel well. I don’t have any problem moving my body, but overall, I still feel tired and sleepy.

After arriving at the venue, I decided to have a bit of practice by acting as Sati’s opponent, but I soon feel tired. Perhaps my stamina is being absorbed in exchange for my body recovering. I am still capable of light movement, but there is no telling how much I can exert my full strength.

But more importantly, my will is shaken after seeing how high the tension is in the atmosphere. The stadium is packed with spectators who have no room left to stand and they are waiting for the match to

start. I initially thought that I have gotten used to this atmosphere for a little, but it seems that it was just in my mind.

My match is the first one for today, and yet I'm feeling so nervous and unable to concentrate for the match. If I win, then I am going to face Sati next. I can't help but to feel demotivated.

Finally, the call for the first match was announced. The venue quickly gets engulfed with excitement. These cheering are mostly for my opponent, the knight princess, Francesca.

The leading candidate for overall championship. An inborn talent, also the successor for the Sword Saint who is also a member of prominent family. With an outstanding beauty, her plain leather equipment failed to hide her gorgeousness.

Following Francesca, I also climbed the stage. Crap, my nervousness meter is rising. If I don't climb up the stair carefully one step at a time, I might fall again. I feel the tension rising after remembering that I had fallen yesterday.

I took a deep breathe in and breathe out. Alright. I think I managed to settle down somewhat.

My eyes met with Francesca. She is stifling her laugh by covering her nose. Perhaps the act is confusing as an onlooker.

But our match won't wait. We stand at the beginning line. Signal to get prepared is released. Already! Too soon!

"Start!"

Francesca began her assault right after the starting signal was released. I blocked her attack with my sword. It's light. But very fast. Just like that, she continues to unleash her second and third attack.....oh, shit. I twisted my sword play to gain some distance, but soon she is already after me. I know she is fast, but only after I experience it that I know she is hella fast.

Besides, the way she moves differ from Sati. I already saw her full strength during that time when she was fighting against Armand. Experiencing it first-hand, however, is a big difference. Dealing with

her is.....again, I'm blocking her attack. This is bad. Right now, I'm blocking her attack with my shield on my left elbow. Yet she managed to skilfully slip through my buckler defence. My arm can still move, but they hurt a lot each time I attempt to move them. I want to cast a recovery magic but her fast attack is hindering me from casting my spell.

It should be fine to block her attack with my sword since her attack is so light, or so I thought, yet it is not that her sword is light. She is controlling the weight behind her sword. I tried to cram as much rotation and its speed as much as I can.

It's light but fast, and the power behind it is perfect. If this hits a vital, then this match might possibly end.

But I'm gradually getting used to her speed and movement. If her attack is light, then there is a way to see around it. After showing a resolve to attempt for a simultaneous strike.....I leap down and escape. With that, I gain some time for myself. I gather my mana and, —— **【Small Heal】** ——finished chanting.

“I should have known, but it was really difficult. But.....”

I don't think there will be another chance to use Recovery Magic like this anymore. Using Recovery Magic while she is attacking in fast succession will be tough indeed. I know it's already late, but I wish I had practiced with Sati.

I create some distance and rearranged my breath. As a matter of course, she isn't letting me use Regeneration. For that reason, she plunged right after me at the beginning of our match. I would like to use Heal one more time if I could, however once she detected my mana flow, she will begin her attack immediately. I shall give more priority for my rest time.

Sadly, the break doesn't seem to last very long. And when the tension seems to be rising around her.....she is coming. Her movement is sharp. She breaks into my territory, and her attack is coated with killing intent.

But I have enough mettle to fight her. My experiences fighting with

Sati can be applied effectively. Even though it is hard to grasp her nimble movement, I can still.....predict her move and follow up with my offense. Making a mistake means I'll be put into predicament, but by skilfully putting obstructions to her movement.....she is mine!

My blow enhanced with enough speed and strength behind it was blocked by her sword and in turn, Francesca was blown off. Her posture has crumbled, or so I thought, but it appears that she was not blown away, only receiving my attack without putting any force to oppose it and leap with the flow. There isn't any opening.

But this way, I can afford another 【Small Heal】 .

Creating an opening is a slow progress, but I'm thankful for each of them. Would it be possible to win if I keep this up? My body is no longer heavy, and I feel my strength is surging nicely. I can feel each swing of my sword now.

My problem right now is her evasion skill is too high and that renders my attack unhittable at the target.

Since Francesca is very good with her evasion, and since my sword was ward off beautifully, I couldn't make the best of my power in my advantage.

There isn't other way unless I find an opening.

Nonetheless, the fatigue from my yesterday match is much worse than I thought. My previous battle has exhausted my strength.

It's still too early to relax my breathe. I truly want to take a breather, but Francesca is not letting me up.

I ended up being the first one to show an opening. While following Francesca movement, my foot ended up slipping for a little bit. Rather than an opening, it is more correct to say it as a small blunder, but Francesca does not miss that.

An attack aiming to my torso is coming. No problem here, since my shield can act as my defence.....yet the attack never arrived. There is no sword coming from her right hand.

Once I realized, my head is already taking the full blunt from her attack. Her attack is coming from my blind spot after she switched her sword to her left hand. My head is protected with a sturdy iron helmet, but the aftershock is enough to cause a concussion and my movement has completely stopped.

When it becomes so, there isn't any way left anymore. I received another 3 strikes from her follow up, and my consciousness faded.

Later, after I woke up, I heard she added another two additional strikes toward me who has fallen. I understand her intents to put me completely stop in motion in order to prevent recovery, but she truly is ruthless.

And thus, Sati is driven mad from seeing that cruelty.

Chapter 19 ~ Sati's Battle

It's painful.

My body. They hurt so much.

Before I noticed, my face was meeting with the cold stone floor, and I was already lying down on my face. Then, intense pains run course through my body.

My consciousness was fading.

Immediately, I cast 【Small Heal】 ——amid my effort to gain consciousness despite the intense pain, the spell activated successfully, and my body felt easier.

Chanting 【Small Heal】 . Based on my Detection skill, Francesca is at a distance and is not moving. I'm still holding my sword. Doesn't seems like I let go of my sword after losing consciousness.

【Small Heal】 ——great, I can do it. I finished casting the third Recovery Magic the soonest.

I gritted my teeth, and hastily get up and hold my sword tight. My recovery is insufficient, but if I stay down too long, I might as well be declared a loser.

However, Francesca wasn't in her stance anymore and seeing that I stood up, a perplexed look appears on her face instead. Don't tell me, she thought I would stay lying down forever?

“Let's continue. Ready yourself!”

Meanwhile, I chanted 【Small Heal】 for myself. Yet, there isn't any sign of our battle beginning.

I'm grateful for her courtesy, but this situation is strange.

“No.....”

When it appears like Francesca wishes to say something, Sati’s voices calling “Masaru sama!” can be heard.

Huh? Why is Sati on the stage? Next to her is a priest who oversees treating the contestant.

“Don’t tell me.....the match was already over?”

“Yes. The outcome of this match was already determined.”

The referee agreed with Sati. Apparently, the outcome of the match was declared while I was knocked unconscious.....

What a disaster. And right after I stood up withstanding my pain with great difficulty. No, why did I try my best? Had I just waited a little longer, Sati and the priest would have arrived, and I would have been spared from taking such an embarrassing action.

My strength left my body completely. The damages that accumulated remains, and my body hurts. This time, the weariness finally hit me.

I declined the priest’s offer for treatment and chanted
【Regeneration】. The pain left my body with regen.

“I’m already fine.”

Sati’s expression eased with relief. In terms of how much recovery I have made, the damages that I sustained were much less compared to yesterday match. The only worrisome factor was that I fainted this time.

“I’m glad. At first, I thought I had gone too far, however things doesn’t seem that way.”

“You’ve gone way overboard! Why did you have to kick him too?”

Sati lashes out at Francesca’s remark. Was I kicked?

“It might not be apparent, but he still held onto his sword that time, hence the act is indeed necessary for confirmation. I did not kick him.

Those were just a light touch.”

“They weren’t light at all!”

Francesca is wearing a solid and hard leather boot for combat. Even if they are light, it will still hurt if you are kicked by one.

“Not to mention, you continued to pursue after Masaru sama even after he fell down! Don’t you know that he had fainted at that point!?”

I fainted and the referee intended to stop our match, however after witnessing my last-minute revival during yesterday’s match, he hesitated whether he should stop the match or not. Perhaps this is what they call, “reap what you sow”.

“Though, when you see him standing up like this, I can imagine him taking on another two, or three hits.....”

“Fu!?”

Sati’s face turned bright red after hearing Francesca’s words. I don’t mind her getting angry for my sake, but I don’t want her starting a fight like this.

“Calm down, Sati. The wounds aren’t any worse compared to yesterday, so that’s enough.”

Even though I was told that I was kicked, I can’t remember any of it.

“.....that’s right. It’s only up to this level. It’s not a big deal at all.”

“My, that’s not what someone who lost should say.”

But that’s not what I meant?

“If Masaru sama was serious, you already suffered a thorough defeat by now!”

“Sati, that’s far enough. The next match is starting soon.”

Next is Sati’s turn.

“Ah, yes. I’ll finish it shortly.”

I got off the stage with Francesca.

“Were you not fighting seriously today?”

This is that moment when making excuses won’t cut it.

“Well, I WAS fighting you seriously, just…….”

In regard to our starting position today, the interval between us is enough for me to finish chanting an elementary level magic.

“Just, what?”

Francesca released a strict sounding voice. Darn, I really should’ve restrained myself from saying something unnecessary.

“If I can use offensive magic, then.”

I didn’t claim I wouldn’t lose, but Francesca’s eyes narrow as a result.

“Ah, the match is starting.”

I thought that marked the ending of our discussion, then Sati ended her match in an instant. As soon the winner was declared, she quickly hops off the stage with a quick run. And having listened as if they were a matter of course, she continued the conversation.

“When he is serious, Masaru sama is stronger than me.”

Hearing Sati’s remark, Francesca lightly sneered as if prompting “it’s easier to say it with your mouth.”.

“If you wish to prove it, we can always have a rematch.”

Even if you say that, I think I already have enough fight.

However, magic itself isn’t really an option. Offensive magic is too powerful and not suitable for matches. Take an Air Hammer, right now I can easily destroy a boulder to pieces if I’m serious. Magic is not suitable to use against human opponent.

“If I win against Francesca sama, that should serve as enough prove.”

“Fuun. And what if you didn’t manage to win?”

Francesca shifted her gaze to me, and Sati also look at me with a sad expression.

I don’t want to step forward, but I will only serve shame to Sati if I try escaping now.

“That time, I will serve as your opponent. Seriously this time.”

And that signalled the end of our conversation. Satisfied, Francesca went to the other side of the stage.

“Um, I’m sorry. I just can’t forgive her, no matter what.”

“It’s fine. You just need to win, Sati.”

“Yes!”

Whether she wins or loses doesn’t matter, it’s the match. Whatever the result, I’m sure they will be good experiences for her.

However, if it turns out there are many opponents that I can’t deal with sword alone, then I will have to seek the best way to combine magic with swordsmanship

Should I experiment with Will once we are home? He can serve as our practice partner for combatant skill.

The next match has begun. There are only 2 remaining matches for the first round.

Since today is the final, the elf row seats are filled with people, so I decided to support Sati right next to the stage. Sati has provided me with chair that she has taken from somewhere else.

While I’m watching the match, I was told about what happened at the end of my match.

My opponent continues their pursuit even after I had fallen to the

ground. Since I took her attack fully while staying unconscious, the scenery looks as if I'm a doll or similar taking a beating from her. It was a spectacle that's not for those with faint heart.

The third match ended while I was listening to the story.

Then the last match for the first round. Towering one head over Lazard san was a human possessing the stature of gigantic giant, known as Gigant Borzola. He is another candidate for the championship.

On top of being a giant, he is also very skilled and move very fast. His power was also ranked first according to the tournament official announcement. Last year, Francesca managed to snatch a win. However, based on the story, it seems that it took her a long time to win.

This guy most probably will make to the final.

All four matches for the first round are now over. All that remains are semi-finals and final round and this tournament is done.

I watched Sati at the special seat beside me near the stage, moving her body lightly.

I can feel her fighting spirit, without a single waste on it. She is very calm. Way different than me.

A voice can be heard coming from the referee. Francesca goes on the stage, accompanied by big cheers.

"I'm going, Masaru sama."

Semi-final. The match between Sati and Francesca begin.

Sati presses her attacks first. She seems to hold no intention for a wait and see approaches and prompted to go all out since beginning. However, Francesca calmly endured against Sati's barrage of attacks, and at the centre of the stage now unfold a bewildering scene of offence and defence.

Both parties jump away and took a distance from each other. Then,

they both clashed again, position replaced, crossing swords over and over.

Due to an almost similar battle style and active defence and offence exchanges, their long rally turns fierce and intense.

I wonder how many times. Whenever they separated from their clash, Sati will abruptly draw out more strength.

I immediately realized what she's attempting to do. She needs a suitable distance and timing to attempt Mubyōshi-uchi.

A casual step, and her light sword swing is.....Francesca took a large leap, retreated away and distanced herself, evading by a hair breadth.

“Your wife was very capable, but Francesca sama is more skilful.”

So, I was told, suddenly. It's Borzola. When I saw him nearby like this, he's really huge. It should be a foul since his footwork is very light.

“That is not all there is to Sati, you know?”

She still has her Recovery Magic as backup, and he'll be surprised once he learns of Sati's power.

Sati wasn't as strong as me. Whether her strengths are the result of her special training, or was it due to her anger, one thing for sure is today her movement is sharper than usual.

Just as I said, Sati's gradually overwhelming her opponent. The difference in their strength is surfacing in their fight.

However, both instantly distanced themselves from each other after their attacks got mixed.

Although it may appear as if they both strike each other, it's only on a slight degree, and both sides seem to suffer no damages.

“Wha—?”

So, I sent a knowing grin to Borzola.

It was said that someone who are capable of pushing Francesca should be on par with the Kingdom's army.

"This lady has commanded us, the unworthy. She is different compared to you, the adventurers."

Francesca had shown to be very talented as a commander. She is also good with sword, as well coming from a royal blood line and a beauty to boot, overall a classy lady.

I get this feeling while talking with her few days ago. Her personality is good, and she is good with her head. She has no shortcoming. Overall, a charismatic person.

Compared to that, both Sati and I are person with a doubtful origin. The evaluation that we received will naturally undermined our ability.

"Just look."

While listening to this guy, I noticed Sati's position has become unfavourable. Was it a feint or something? The opponent slips away from Sati's calculated attack perfectly. Seems like it hard to make a good attack.

"What happened?"

It's only natural for her stamina to dissipated, but even though there isn't any apparent damage on her, Sati's movement suddenly become worse.

"Wouldn't you do the same too? Predicting your opponent movement and crush them. She is doing just that but on much higher level."

Her move is subtle, and there is no way to realize them immediately. I wouldn't have noticed it if not explained by Borzola. This guy, he is a good person.

"Her movement is nimble, but an adventurer straight forward sword is just easy to read."

She is a difficult and frightening opponent for Sati, since she can read

Sati's movement.....

When you're taking on monsters as your opponent, speed and power are more important than skills. Sati had experience handling human opponent, but she still lacks in experience when handling this level of offence and defence.

Once able to dodge with a paper-thin difference, now it's becoming harder to evade. Both of them still only grazed on their leather armour, but it's turning worse.

The balanced got crumbled right away. When they clashed, Sati's knee suddenly gave up.

Francesca didn't let this opportunity miss and struck a blow. Sati dodged the following attack, but she's now suffering a lot of damage.

"By intercepting your opponent strength in timely manner, just like this, and your opponent will lose their strength. That is one of Francesca sama art."

His explanation doesn't make it clear, but she's likely performed an Aiki but with her swordplay.

Borzola has tasted it a lot of times when he lost to her last year.

"She should've lost her willpower to fight by now but, looks like she is pretty gutsy."

Nonetheless, Sati's inferiority is clear to everyone eyes. Francesca has been concealing her hand even during her fight with me earlier. If only I was a little stronger, then I could've shown Sati more of Francesca's tactics.

Aah, she was hit again. At the very least, Sati can use Recovery Magic, but she still needs a lot of time.

Sati is being leads around by Francesca sword, completely getting toyed with.

Perhaps, Sati couldn't win.....

Sati should be superior when comparing physical ability, and yet, this shows that her candidacy for the next Sword Saint is not for show.

Despite her inferiority, regardless of getting hit many times over, Sati's willpower never faded, and she continues to receive Francesca attack. Their long rally continues uninterrupted. Was it her intention to turn this into a stamina competition?

However, Francesca distanced herself. Matching her is Sati, who also jumped far to the end of the stage.

The distance between them is now the widest, with a large open space in between.

Sati is gathering her mana. Francesca does not move. She hasn't notice.

Sati's Recovery Magic activated. Once more.....a thin layer of mana is gathering slowly.....a shocked expression surfaced on Francesca's face, who's now correcting her breath. It seems she finally realized that Sati is using Recovery Magic. She hastily closed their distance.

But she's too late. Sati's second 【Small Heal】 was activated safely.

Perhaps, Francesca ability to detect magic is low, or maybe the stadium was overflowed with mana coming coagulated from the spectators which make her misses Sati's weak mana. In any case, the prejudice where a beastmens are incapable of magic helped to make her unwary.

It isn't possible to completely heal her wound even after the second time, but now it should be much easier for Sati.

Somehow, Sati is getting better, much more than what I initially thought. Sati was responding back to Francesca moves. She still hasn't made her counterattack yet, right now she is fully defending.

"She's making a comeback, but can she win by defending alone?"

Then, Borzola said.

"In appears to me that Francesca sama is getting impatient to finish

Sati as soon as possible.”

She must have thought that her opponent has recovered enough to hold superiority against her, but that’s nothing more than her misunderstanding.

There isn’t any real need to be cautious on Sati’s Recovery Magic, but her perceptions might have change after fighting me. Just in case Sati is resilience as me.....she is trying to end this match as soon as possible on that basis.

That little impatience is good for Sati.

Without a decisive factor, the balance tilts toward Sati as time passes.

A human has limited time to fight in their peak. Francesca’s legs gradually dulled and stopped, with both sides remaining equal.

Sati is still fine.

“Perhaps, this is the turning point?”

Borzola then followed.

“It’s not that the person can’t move. She stopped moving her own feet. She is keeping her strength in check and wait for a chance for counterattack.”

Just like he said, Francesca vehemently defends like a turtle. But wouldn’t Sati take those into consideration?

Sati mercilessly attacks. Francesca received Sati’s attack loaded with all her strength upfront. Francesca swords moved like a stream, but at last, Sati’s sword finally hit Francesca body.

However, Francesca’s fluttering sword also hit Sati as a result. Both swords struck down their opponent, and both stopped moving completely.

A beautiful simultaneous strike. The two barely stood, and both leave their swords on their opponent without making a single move. The damages must have been great and rendered them unmovable.

“Francesca sama deliberately took it and shifted her core ever so slightly. Your wife is suffering worse damage.”

That’s probably the case, but with the amount of power Sati put on those attacks, Francesca should be suffering more damage than expected. If not, she should have made a follow up attack instead of stopping here.

Neither of them has moved yet. This is the chance where people will usually use to recover themselves, but it took skill to concentrate mana while sustaining damages. Can Sati do it?

As expected, Sati is trying to gather her mana and Francesca attempted to disturb her. Sati was already close when, Francesca gave a headbutt. Only their helmets clashed, so despite having her chants interrupted, there doesn’t seem to be any damage.

Then, Francesca makes a follow up attack, flinging her fists.

Sati is also capable of fighting barehanded. Or so I thought, but Francesca’s fist was struck on Sati’s face and made her fall.

Just when I’m thinking about her strange fall, her feet got trampled down. Heartless.

Still, Sati stood up quickly.

She holds her sword firmly and wipe the nosebleed.

Francesca readied her sword and rearranged her breath.

I don’t know who are in advantageous position, or who’re currently sustaining most damages. It’s hard to know just by looking.

Francesca immediately made another attack.

Sati’s attempt to collect her mana was once again disturbed. But this time, Sati has no intention to let Francesca took a rest.

As for Francesca, her sword swing doesn’t seem like it’s lacking in power.

However, her legs are not moving anymore.

On the other hand, Sati still has enough energy. Her body is moving well. I wonder how big the damage was caused by Francesca.

Sati's sword is still strong. By the looks of it, Francesca fatigue has started kicking in. The damages she received are significant. And yet, Sati still couldn't push forward.

Francesca is still enduring well.

Was it due to the difference in their experience? So, this is the difference between half a year with swords experience compared to 10 years of experience.

It was said that Francesca has been holding sword since she was three years old. She has been showing great talent ever since childhood, and it was only last year when she won the overall tournament for the first time. And to achieve that she has tasted lots of hardship many, many times. That difference is what showing late in this match.

Francesca endured all Sati's attacks. As a result of continuous attack, Sati's movement finally began to slow down.



Francesca made a precise and efficient set of attacks, which occasionally hurts Sati. Francesca is way superior as a strategist.

Sati is not going down. Anyhow, if she backed down at this moment, that chance will be used by Francesca to recover herself. The situation will remain unchanged then or might turn out worse.

Francesca was also hurting. Her stamina should've hit rock bottom by now and yet she's not showing an opening.

An expression of fear is surfacing on Sati's face.

No matter how many attacks, or how much pain her opponent accumulated, it would not work, she just could not win, or so she must be thinking. My heart is breaking.

Still, Sati remains, but instead of attacking, she opted for a defensive battle.

She has taken too many hits. Sati should hit her limit soon. It's hurt just to watch.

"Sati."

My voice leaked unintentionally when the two took a slight pause in the middle of the battle. It was just a tiny muttering, and they shouldn't reach till the stage. Sati however, turned her face sideways straight to me. Our eyes met.

Any trace of timid expression disappeared, and a look full of resolution filled Sati. She kept her face facing mine.

Amid battle, Sati completely took her eyes off Francesca.

Her opponent didn't let those perfect opportunity missed. The reason why she didn't make her move immediately was probably because she was astounded. But in the end, she must have decided that it was her chance.

Francesca sword strike Sati who is full of opening.

The attack from the complete blind spot was going to hit, or so everyone thought. Even I thought it was over. However, Sati evaded it smoothly.

Her Hearing Detection skill, huh. Even if her line of sight was removed, Francesca's movement was completely grasped by her auditory detection.

Sati will never show an opening unless to lure her opponent. As a result, Francesca who leaped and put all her strength into her attack was left with her posture crumbled and full of opening, in which Sati exploited to launch her counterattack that hit her and made her fall on stage.

After confirming that Francesca is not moving even a twitch, the referee declared the outcome of the match.

Sati raised her sword.

“I did it, Masaru sama.”

Yeah, well done Sati. Her voice was delivered properly amidst the huge cheers from the crowd.

Chapter 20 ~ Conclusion

Sati was hungry, so I took out her favourite peach-like fruit. She finally stopped eating after devouring five platters. Well, as long as she can digest them, but she took an attack on her stomach.....or not.

Afterwards, she went resting while sitting down with both knees in hand.

In addition to fighting a long-drawn battle against Francesca, she also received a lot of damages. Despite receiving a treatment right on the spot, her exhaustion due to her injuries lingered, and they should remain for several days.

How much can she recover within this short period before the final begin?

Her opponent in the final is the winner candidate, the unnatural giant Borzola. He is a terrible opponent even against Francesca. He mentioned that this year, he is going to beat Francesca and win. Without a mistake, a strong enemy.

He easily defeated his opponent in semi-final. Thanks to that, our time to rest was greatly reduced.

“How will you fight?”

“I will do my best from the beginning.”

Challenging him into a short, decisive battle, then adjust accordingly to the flow of the fight.

Borzola seems like the type to be good at frontal confrontation. However, since he won without showing his true ability, we can't set a specific countermeasure against him. Well, it's normal to be on the actual spot without having any plan.

Then again, his speed and skills should be below Francesca, if his power is around Sati's then she should be able to fight sufficiently.

That's assuming if she is in a perfect condition.

Right after the semi-final, the announced odds are still in favour to Borzola. Even though there isn't any mistake with Sati's abilities now that she has defeated Francesca, Sati is way too exhausted. That is the official take on the situation.

There is a voting ticket sales office for arena spectators next to the stage. Just speak to the staff around there and they will buy the ticket for you. Since there is plenty of time to purchase after the odds are finalized, we can go purchase them for ourselves. The prediction outcome might be rough to some contestants, so they are not recommended to buy their own.

Since both Sati and me have risen as dark horses in this tournament, I'm sure there are a lot of people who have incurred losses.

I don't have any need to make more money, but both Sati and I were entrusted to buy them. I've purchased them for each round. Despite the uneasiness regarding the stamina, if Borzola is weaker than Francesca, then it will make a good bet since the odds are lucrative for us.

An announcement resounded throughout the venue mentioning the beginning for the final round. The ballot will close soon. Hearing the notice, people who haven't buy their vote hurried so.

There are still quite a few minutes left before the round start, so in the end the break time allocated was around 30 minutes. Normally, this long break time should have been enough, but.....

Sati open her eyes and stand up and slowly stretched.

"How is your body?"

".....they almost recovered. My body still feels heavy, but I can move with all my power."

Swinging the sword as if to confirm, Sati replied. The break time

seems effective despite being short, and her face cleared up. She has recovered enough to fight although, there is no way to know her limit right now.

“If you feel like you can’t do it, make sure not to overdone yourself alright?”

Her match with Francesca was bad for my heart. I have earned enough, and Sati’s safety is more important.

“No worry, the victory will be mine anyway.”

Do you really want the pass to monopoly me for a day that much? In that case, I can give it right now as the reward for defeating Francesca.....

“I’m talking about Tamara chan.”

It’s about stuff when we return.

Tamara-chan, one of the three slaves I bought recently, has a lover in the village. I summoned them from my territory, and this time I brought them to the capital city for their honeymoon. As a matter of fact, they came to watch the tournament and despite the amount of their betting money is insignificant, they still use their own pocket money, nonetheless.

“If I won, they can be liberated.”

If Sati won the overall championship, it will become a big and unexpected winning. Yesterday, they don’t have much money and couldn’t bet a lot, but today both the husband and wife are betting to the absolute limit, or so the rumours that I casually happened to hear.

Any bets made are entirely self-responsibility, but Sati is in good relationship with the slaves. Naturally she wishes to help.

In their case, if they managed to save money decently, it should have taken them 5 to 10 years for liberation. However, if Sati won, they will get the money required at once. If that happens, we will have to sit down and discuss. Maybe they want to go back to their village,

but they might like to stay in a city like this royal capital. Since both of them work well, I feel like it's best to leave the decision to them.

"I wonder if Shira is betting as well?"

Recently, the atmosphere between Shira chan and me has been good but if she simply gets up and leave, that will make me cry you know?

"I've heard that she wants to find a good equipment if she won the bet."

My God. Thank goodness.

As for the other slave, Lufutona chan, it seems that she returns after encountering the crowds in Kingdom capital city and triggering her man hater. Well, if that girl was liberated before her man hater is healed, she would need to find a place or family with only girls, which I doubt exists.

"In that case, do your best."

"Understood. Then, I'm going. Please wait just a little while longer."

Thunderous cheering echoed when Sati went up. As expected, she has truly gathered some fans. Sati responded by waving her hand and smile. Meanwhile, the cheers for her opponent Borzola don't stand out. Fighting against Sati makes him looks more like a villain.

Yet without minding all those, Borzola talked to Sati.

"Surely you can't recover fully during the short break. Wouldn't you just default your losses before watching the pain that's going to unfold in front of your eyes?"

Sati is being underestimated. That's what I want to say, but when it comes to this level of fight, even a slight disadvantage can determine victory or defeat. He might have misread Sati's recovery status but being in disadvantages change nothing.

"There is no problem at all. Keep the idle talk to yourself and come at me."

Once in a blue moon, you can hear Sati utter such a line. She might have blended in way too much while training with other adventurers.

“That isn’t quite bad.”

Saying that, Borzola readied his sword and lifted his large shield.

The shield is different compared to the one he used during semifinal. Originally, he used a large shield that fit his physique, but this time his shield is even bigger, appearing like a tower shield type of equipment.

That was perhaps his hidden countermeasures against Francesca, but against Sati who doesn’t really know about his tactic, his hidden countermeasure holds less significance.

Regardless, does this mean that he has changed his strategy to going for defensive? He might be trying to avoid a direct confrontation against Francesca, but what about when Sati is his opponent? So, my mind ponders.

That thing looks like bad news. The size of the shield might raise one’s eyebrows, but what’s scarier is the length of its reaches. When the shield is stick out, there is no way Sati’s sword can get through it purely due to its sheer size.

Sati is probably the smallest contestant in this tournament. Compared to her, the opponent is Borzola, the person who boasts the largest physique in this tournament.

Just like how I deal against the Templar Knight yesterday, it would be nice if she could feint her move against her opponent, but her opponent right now is Borzola, a person who is ready to face against Francesca. There is no way such a simple tactic could work.

Usually, a person movement is deterred by the weight of the large shield, but for Borzola, a large shield is well balanced and suited him. There is no way he couldn’t handle it.

Skilfully move and find an opening in between the gaps.....ah, not possible. How about his stamina consumption.....?

The referee voice signalling “Start!” can be heard.

Sati fall back a great distance. Borzola doesn’t move. He probably intended to observe first.

Sati change her sword grip to both hand and held it low. Isn’t this my, well to say it specifically, Lazard san certain one hit tactic? Did she practice it yesterday?

Sati charged. Fast, but straight ahead.

A huge swing of sword accompanied by a tremendous amount of force from her huge leap clashed against the shield.

Clang. A sound reverberated as if the sword was broken.

Yet no matter how strong the force is applied in the attack, the great shield handled them with ease.....

Without breaking the flow, Sati unleashed her next attack with her sword. Whether the technique was copied correctly or not, it’s apparent that they look smoother and better than mine.

Clang. Again, Sati’s attack was slightly blocked by the great shield at a slightly different spot. Immediately, Borzola drawn his own sword. Sati easily took it on and step back at once. There isn’t a pursuit.

Once again, Sati took the same stance.

“The next one will be my full power.”

So, Sati murmured. Seems like the attack just now was meant to be a trial, a mean to check her strength.

Sati made her moves. As expected, her speed is far greater compared to her first attack. Her sword clashed against Borzola’s shield with great momentum.

A great impact ensued. Borzola lowered the shield in his hand. Was he able to defend against that attack? However, it seems that Borzola’s shield is still firmly rooted on the stage.

Sati's attacks bring an immediate effect to the shield. Borzola's shield was flipped sideways.

Borzola rushed to counterattack Sati with his sword, yet he was overwhelmed with Sati's powerful and unmatched strike.

Now that his sword and shield was repelled, Borzola's large build is exposed before Sati. Even while enduring pain, Borzola facial expression betray any sense of agony. Sati sword hit him beautifully.

Sati unleashed yet another attack. Borzola was down to his knees and slowly collapse.

The venue falls silent.

Borzola collapsed on Sati's feet. His movement ceased immediately.

"T-the match is finished!"

The stadium was filled with great cheers.

"The Giant Slayer!"

It was a nickname that someone came out with, and they became Sati's second name.

As soon after Sati has heard the referee announcement, she quickly half-run to my location.

"I did it!"

"Y-yeah. Good job."

Too soon. I think only around a minute has passed or so?

"U-um.....about that."

Ah, that huh. I guess she really wants it.

"Here. Masaru one day exclusive ticket."

We have returned to the beginning.

Sati put down her sword and received the ticket firmly with both hands. This thing was simply written on a piece of paper from my note though. How regrettable.

Sati made sure the ticket has safely traversed between hands and held it gently in her chests.

“Thank you very much! I will make sure to treasure it!”

No, please use it. I don’t mind it even if you took them apart.

After finally satisfied gazing at the ticket for a while, Sati pick up her sword and winced.

“What’s the matter?”

“My wrist.”

Her right wrist seems to be hurt, so I used Recovery Magic on them. doesn’t seems like she is hurting anywhere else.

I’ve made sure to completely cure the injuries that she received while fighting Francesca before. She doesn’t take any damage from this battle, so there is one possibility left.

Her full powered second assault. At that time, Sati should have suffered a terrible impact on her wrist.

Perhaps she put an unfamiliar burden on her wrist when she wields such an affectation technique back then?

Or was Sati’s body simply unable to withstand great power?

Anyway, if she couldn’t decide there, she would have been in great trouble.

When I did it.....I applied numerous Recovery Magic due to series of terrible damage that I received. There is a possibility that I have hurt my wrist, just I never noticed.

Even Sati only realized it after everything is over. Perhaps, we didn’t realise it because of adrenaline rush during battle.

I need to make sure about this. If there is risk of wrist damage each time, we use it, then it is not applicable in real battle. No, maybe real battle is fine? It's unlikely to hit a huge shield with a bladed sword. The impact alone would cleave the opponent right into two.

But that doesn't mean I should not make confirmation.

Should I let Sati fight with her full power and observe whether her body can survive? Nah, that's an awful method to make confirmation.

No, there actually is a person that can be relied on in times like this. Let's go ask Sergeant dono.

Sati was recalled to the stage. There, the King descended and thus the award ceremony was held. After giving a praising speech to Sati, he awards her a prize bag containing gold coins.

Lastly, a grand applause was given to participants who have displayed magnificent battle for this tournament! The curtain is drawn, signifying the end of this tournament.

"Sadly, now is not the right time to celebrate with a splendor ceremony....."

So, said the Elf captain.

Some people had difficulty to stand, and some people need urgent care and rest like me yesterday, so the King has settled to a simple ceremony for now.

If you like things flashy, they can simply go out to enjoy the rest of festivals and they will be welcomed everywhere. Hence, no one seems to be dissatisfied.

It's not as if there isn't a closing party prepared. Something is being prepared at the vicinity of the tournament stage. A lavish meal is served in a standing-up style. I wished to go back early and took a rest, but seeing that Sati is the winner, attending this meal has become compulsory.

After letting everyone know that we are going to the closing party, I was called by Borzola who already start eaten and cooked once I entered the venue inside the stadium.

Standing next to him is Francesca, who's gulping down her drinks with a face containing sullen anger. Only the manager or contestants for the final are around, which means that this is really a small closing party.

“Man~ I was really surprised just now. Who ever thought that she will knock my shield out like that!”

“It was only possible because you took it full frontal.”

He took Sati's full power attack directly. Sati's momentum would reduce even if he evaded for a small amount, but instead of evading, he decided to ward Sati off. He probably didn't think Sati will hold that much power. Even I don't know.

“Hey, Sati!”

Francesca, who had been listening silently for a bit while having a meal with Borzola and Sati, suddenly interrupted from the side. Her face is red. Was she drinking alcohol?

“Next year. Make sure you enter the tournament next year.”

Next year, huh. I don't want to enter anymore, but it's up to Sati whether she wants or not.

“Then why not we meet at the Empire's grand tournament.”

“Oh, that's a great idea. If it's Sati or Francesca sama, I'm sure they can aim for championship.”

“But there are a lot more amazing people in the Empire's tournament, right?”

“That's correct. But I will become stronger. I will be under the tutelage of Sword Saint. And the next time I meet you, I will definitely.....”

“Ah, that’s what we are planning to do, too! Hopefully, we can practice together.”

Armand and Sati is going as well to received teaching.

Unable to retort any further, she gulps down whatever alcohol left with a discouraged expression.

Extra: Gossip ~ Words About Yamano Masaru Being a Hero

The song has a very good reputation here, and even during the festival, it was sung in a large hall.

It was about half a year ago when I met an adventurer at the town of Shiori, and thanks to that opportunity, I learnt Ani-song from him. To my surprise, I found him competing in the main round when I came to watch the tournament to take a breather.

Moreover, there is a qualifying preliminary round right before the main match, an unusual format. Before the match started, the Truth Officials gathered around, as if there are some circumstances.

“Was Gustave a strong warrior?”

“Yeah. He was considered strongest even amongst the other member of military family Byron. He was a runner up several years ago, and this time he is one of the winner candidates.”

After listening to the surrounding talks, people seem to be aware of the contestant named Gustave, but nothing about Masaru. And nobody seems to know about this about this preliminary qualifying round. But there seems to be something behind this round, seeing as last moment changes are rare for this tournament.

During his wedding, he married all four at once. I heard that he was quite a talented adventurer, maybe an A rank.

Then, regardless of his rank, Masaru has proved to be very strong. Against Gustave and even against Lazard. My hand clasped together is wet with sweats, and whenever he won, I cheered out unintentionally.

I really wanted to talk to him, but I cannot descend to the venue hall.

While I was struck in confusion, the drawn lot to decide tomorrow opponents was already finished and people have gradually eased.

Should I went looking at the Elf seating, or instead of asking the elves, should I just ask the Adventurer Guild for Masaru's whereabouts?

When I went to asked around the Adventurer Guild, I immediately found someone who know Masaru.

"Your face is kind of familiar. Oh, wasn't you the one who sung at Shiori town? You are asking about Masaru? His matches today were amazing!"

The adventurer did not know where Masaru would stay, but since he seems knowledgeable about Masaru, I decided to listen to his story. Now that I think about it clearly, I know very little about Masaru. The only time I did talked to him was during practice, when he taught me new song for his wedding.

After listening to the adventurer's story, I have come into a vehement regret now that I've never actually asked a lot about Masaru before.

His fight with the Wild Rabbit. Him becoming the Wild Rabbit hunter. The dragon subjugation. Harpies raid on the town. The defensive battle at Gorbas Fortress. Taking four women as wives, and his dispute with Byron family over Miss Tilika.

Never would I have thought that much interesting stories happening at the background before the wedding ceremony.

After that, he seemed to spend some time for winter vacation somewhere else, and he seemed to get involved with the elves during that time? A while ago, I hear that the Elf Country was under attack by monsters.....

It is possible to compose poems about him. It's fun to sing a song taught by him, but the main thing about being a minstrel is, to sing tales and stories. Composing songs, especially an original, singing them and spread it throughout the entire world.

The stories so far are interests inducing. No, it doesn't end with being interesting. By turning them into poetries, I'm sure he will garner more reputation.

What makes him decide to fight Gustav Byron again in an unusual form of preliminary qualifier? What is his relationship with the elf? Moreover, nobody knows about Masaru before he arrived at Shiori town.

There is also that strange song. For me, a minstrel who has travelled everywhere and met vast countenance, has gained lot of insight. However, none of my acquaintances, or anyone know of that song, which made me finally comprehend how far his hometown must really be.

The more you investigate, the more interesting stories about him you will hear.

“Are you instructor Vogt?”

An adventurer asked me to look up this person if I wish to learn more about Masaru. He remembers me singing during Masaru wedding ceremony, and he made some time to talk.

“The truth is, I am looking into Masaru in detail.”

“What will you do after you finished checking up into him?”

“I am a minstrel. Of course, I'm going to compose a song, one telling about his tales.”

“.....Masaru will not like it.”

“Why would he? Isn't it so honourable to be sung by a minstrel, if you are an adventurer?”

“He doesn't like to stand out. Even now, he actually participates in this tournament against his will.”

“I heard he already duelled George Byron before his marriage. So, why is he fighting again in this tournament?”

“Apparently, the Byron family was not convinced by George’s case. So, for the second time, they applied to Masaru for a duel in the open venue. No, the rest is as you know. The story is concluded after today’s match.”

Speaking of which, the adventurer just now also mentioned about the duel with George, but never tell me about the details. Does it had something to do with Byron family? This makes the story cumbersome.

“I was indebted to him. I thought it would be a good repayment if I could make a good song

“Indebted?”

I told him about the strange upbeat song, and how the song has garnered popularity in the Kingdom’s Capital.

“That kind of song, huh. He doesn’t mind you writing a song about him, but you should ask him first before releasing them to public. Well, something like a permission to publish. Aside that, isn’t it dangerous to investigate about this duel? Don’t tell me it was already too late, and you already sniffed around?”

“I just talked to an adventurer who seem to be familiar with Masaru, that’s everyone.”

“Then it’s fine. You don’t need to know any more than this.”

“.....thank you for the warning. I’m going to compose the song about him anyways. For now, I just want to know more about him.”

“You will not stop investigating?”

“Yes. After listening to your story, my interests have pique.”

If I faltered from this amount of pressure, then I’m not fit to make journey after journey as a minstrel. Singing is my life.

“Don’t investigate about this any further. And if you can keep what you hear about here for a while, I don’t mind telling you a lil’ bit more about him.”

“Wait, for a while?”

“Eventually.....no, soon this world will come into light about Masaru, and everyone will know his name. If that happens.....”

Even if I don't write a song, someone else will write their own version of him.

“Will he win the overall championship for this tournament?”

“That, I don't know. But such an insignificant story doesn't fit that guy. Masaru has a calibre of a hero.”

“A heroic tale.....”

“Correct. A heroic tale is formed, and his name is left for future generation. That's what I think.”

If he truly has a capacity of making song about a heroic tale of himself, I have the access to Masaru's life before his fame rises through his achievement, which makes me ahead of another rivals. For now, I hold a monopoly over this information. Over time, I can develop the song.

“I understand. Until he makes more names to himself, I will keep the idea of turning his story into songs deep within my chests. And when the time to announce them has come, I will sing to the person himself first and ask for his permission.”

The stories I heard were an introduction for my investigation, more detailed compared to the adventurer, and with personal episodes, coming up as absolutely interesting. Truly fascinating stories.

His party members are diverse as well. One might think all his beautiful wives are simply his harem, however each one of them is an adventurer possessing a might of hundreds of warriors. Their job varies from a priest to a magician, an elf and beastmen warrior, lest not forget a Truth Official. It is said that the girl who was the Truth Official which caused the duel has also become a party member and is currently working as an adventurer. Why did a Truth Official join an adventurer's party? As expected, the details of how everyone

begin to fall in love was not told in detail. According to his words, it's possible to understand by examining him. There seems to be no shortage of interesting stories surrounding Masaru.

And the mystery regarding Masaru's origin is still unknown. Regarding what happened at the Elves Country, neither instructor Vogt is aware of the details. Perhaps the person himself intentionally want to leave it a secret. It wasn't made clear at all.

Masaru's territory, as well the Elves Country. Once the festival at the royal capital is over, my contract here will also expire. Should I go to the site to investigate?

"It's customary not to ask the adventurers about their past, and as for the elves.....unless you're prepared to turn the elves into your enemy, you shouldn't investigate them too much."

The topic has turned into the discussion of how dangerous my investigation is, again.

"Masaru's new elf wife is one of the top-ranking elves. Perhaps it was thanks to his merit during the battle at the Elves Country. The elves seem to hold an immense sense of gratitude to Masaru."

If a royal class elf joined Masaru's party as an adventurer, if I tried to sniff around, or rather spread my song about them, surely that will incur their imperial wrath. Despite the elf's elegant appearance, there are some fairly bloody stories that don't fit their look.

"Next is how they are related to the stories regarding the duel between him and Byron family. Apparently, the elves were ready to fight off Byron family to protect Masaru. And that lead to Masaru reluctantly entering the tournament."

Instructor Vogt laughed a little, saying nothing's wrong with a total war.

The King has great trust on the elves, hence how they maintain a firm position in the kingdom.

Yet, they will go into a total war against Byron family, who are said to be a famous military family, just for the sake of protecting an

individual name Masaru?

And that was the reason why he reluctantly accepted to enter the tournament?

There is no way the kingdom can turn a blind eye against a pretext to start a civil war. Regardless of who won and lose, it's a sad fact that both sides will suffer heavy losses.

“Masaru has a lot of allies. If there is anyone who's creating trouble with him, many people will make their move, and I am one of them.

An instructor slashes a former A rank adventurer from the guild sent me a stare full of murderous intent, which made me shudder up.

In addition, there are also Byron family and the elf.

No matter how much lives you have, you don't want to turn them from an ally to enemy. When the Truth Official is involved, it seems unlikely that there is mistake.

It brought out more curiosity from myself, though.....

“This information was not announced at public, but after a few months, once the rainy season is over, a large-scale Hilgis recapture troop will be dispatched. The Adventurer Guild will also send their men.”

“Will that include Masaru's party?”

“After the tournament was over, I was going to request his participation.”

I have heard a lot about Hilgis from various people, about how the almighty Imperial army has given up on recapturing it, and about how large the demons force until they were forced to close the border.

“Would he agree to participate?”

“The rewards will be on the same level as emergency quest, however when compared to the dangerous nature and how long the battle will

be, the rewards are drop in a bucket. Furthermore, the battle is at a country very far away. It would be delightful if there is anyone who is willing to participate at all.”

In addition, it's almost certain for Masaru to gain territory and rise as a noble. He seems to be continuing his adventuring for a while, but there is no reason for him to jump into the tiger's mouth himself.

“But still.”

So, instructor Vaught continues.

“What if Masaru turn out to be a hero?”

He nodded while throwing that phrases over to me.

Masaru lost his first match in the next day's fight, but then Sati take on the noblewoman, and after that she became the winner of the tournament.

In regards for Masaru participation in Hilgis Recapturing Army, he ends up accepting the request with immediate reply.

In the end, I decided not to get into contact with Masaru.

If I indeed write a song for him, instructor Vogt warned saying that Masaru will definitely stop me. Plus, I don't have much time to work onto it during the festival anyway.

However, I was able to convince instructor Vogt that I was a friend and a follower of Masaru, thus obtaining more details and various interesting information.

Now I see, a hero's vessel huh.

And I gathered my resolve again.

I am going to write a song about him and sing it.

Hundreds of years have passed since the story of the first hero was

written. The name of the minstrel who wrote the song has been elevated to legendary status, and even now there isn't any sign of it fading into obscurity.

Will Masaru truly become a new hero, and will I become the writer of the new brave story?

There is no way for a mortal who is not a God to know what the future hold, however I wish that by crossing road with him, I pray for the God's blessing to grace us all.

character status

LV.7

ウィルフレッド・ガレイ

種族 | ヒューマン 職業 | 戦士

HP | 28 MP | 10

スキルポイント | 29P

力 15

体力 14

敏捷 12

器用 21

魔力 7

忠誠心 55

スキル

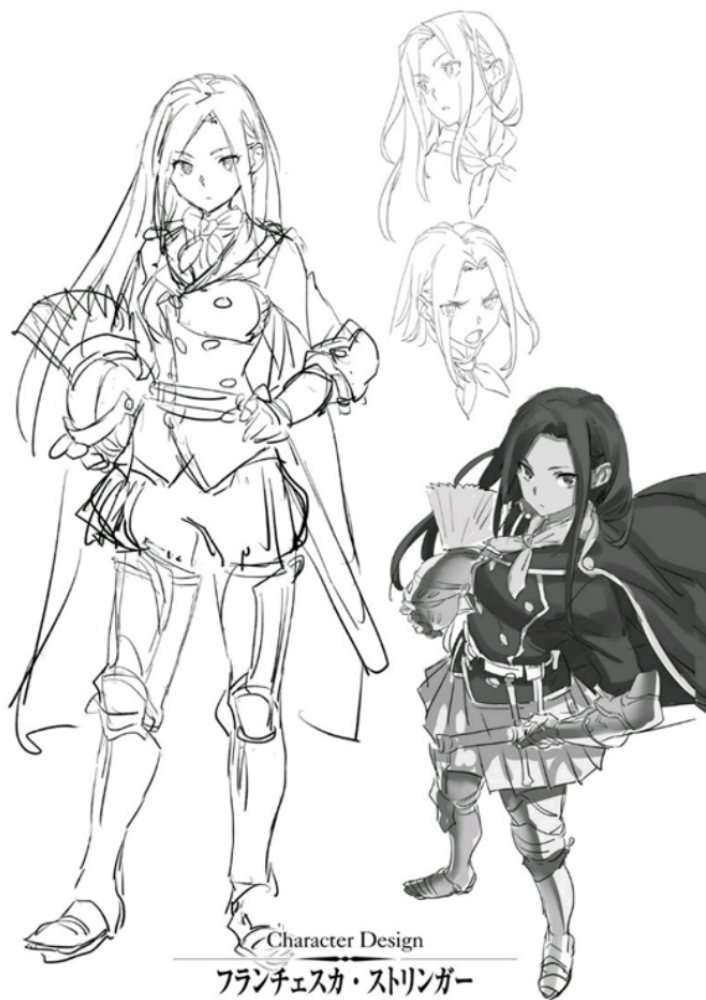
回避レベル1
盾術レベル1
剣術レベル2
弓術レベル1
槍術レベル1
魔力感知レベル1
生活魔法

装備

数打ちの剣
安物のバックラー
レザーアーマー

ギルドランク
E





Character Design

フランチェスカ・ストリンガー



END VOLUME 7

Credits

Translation Group: [Working NEET Translation](#)

EPUB is done by JLN

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